IMAGES OF WELSH WOMEN AS PORTRAYED BY ANGLO-WELSH WOMEN NOVELISTS 1850-1985

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Socially constructed models of femininity have directed the lives of women for centuries and this has often been reflected in the literature of each historical period. Classical and biblical literature promoted images of ideal women, while demonstrating also, through representations of their counterparts, the fate of women who challenged the *status quo*. Such images were modified as societies changed but, in general, it was only the women who conformed who achieved lasting happiness through marriage. In Victorian Britain the rise of the domestic ideology gave birth to the restrictive stereotype of the Perfect Lady and this effectively confined women to the home.

Welsh women's history has mostly remained hidden, but recent studies of nineteenth century female education have highlighted the extent to which English middle class domestic ideology influenced Welsh society. To counteract the undesirable images of Welsh women projected by the 1847 *Reports of the Commissions of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, the literature of Wales developed strong mother figures, delineated as the repositories for moral values. Thus, the English paragon was imported into Wales as a working-class model; The Mam. By the end of the century, women were seeking equality in education and employment, and equal legal and political status, and this philosophy also percolated through to the working classes.

While the images of Welsh women which women novelists in Wales have presented do include such stereotypes as, the Perfect Lady, Mam, New Woman, and Harlot, the authors have demonstrated a considerable range and depth of characterization. Despite the restrictions of the genre many of them have addressed social and political issues, especially those which focused on the position of women, within their works, and have represented the harsh realities of life for women in Wales. Their novels reflect an acute awareness of the inequalities between the sexes which were propagated by Church and State, and it is significant that it is the women writers who have all, to a greater or lesser degree, identified education as the key to female emancipation.

RESEARCH AIMS

It is the intention of this thesis to identify the images of Welsh women portrayed in the fiction of Anglo-Welsh women writers between 1850 and 1985, to attempt to assess the extent to which they were influenced by the social and political climate of the times, and to determine whether there have been significant changes in female imagery during the relevant time period. The establishment, employment and function of female imagery will be considered in relation to authors' attitudes to the changing roles of women in society. The imagery identified will also be compared with that used by a number of contemporary male writers.

The main criterion for the selection of authors within this thesis has been that their work must have focused to a significant extent on Welsh women, and not just on Wales. It is not the intention of this thesis to debate the use of the term "Anglo-Welsh", although reference will be made to a number of eminent critics' work on this topic.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. IMAGES OF WOMEN

While the inherent dangers of using fiction as an historical/sociological source of reference is acknowledged, Rowbotham (1989) argues that it is possible "to work out an approach which will permit a constructive use ... of certain literary sources" (p.1). An exploration of images of women in literature, for example, provides considerable information regarding society's attitudes to gender. Brown (1990) maintains that such images become "a system of codes and signs ... which construct meaning" (p.15) and Angela John (1984) contends that "without confronting how gender is constructed both unconsciously and consciously we cannot appreciate how popular culture and power relations have been shaped" (p.87).

For much of history, men have been perceived as the providers, rooted in the public sphere, while women's roles have been established in the private sphere, and mostly reflected or depended upon their relationship with men. Archetypal and stereotypical imagery of women in Western literature stems from the Bible and classical culture. Eve was not created as a person in her own right but as an adjunct to Adam, to serve him, to be his helpmate. She is portrayed as sensual and instinctive, suggesting that she is of a lower order than Adam. Whereas curiosity in man would have been viewed as a virtue, in woman it was transmuted to a fault: a lack of self control. From Greek mythology it was Eve's counterpart, Pandora, who was responsible for the release of evils into the world when she was unable to contain her curiosity. Thus women's subordinate role was established early and served to reinforce the sexual/social hierarchy. Women who did not conform to these (predominantly) male-

created ideals were generally considered at best eccentric, at worst as social outcasts. However, Simone de Beauvoir (1949) argued that female behaviour is not driven by hormones or predetermined in the female brain, but arises through a process of conditioning of the young girl by society.

The concept of woman being driven by her emotions (rather than her intellect or reason) and creating havoc in men's lives, is the theme that strongly informs classical literature. The image of woman as enchantress has also pervaded literature and has led, perhaps, to the view that to retain men's interest women must, as popular songs have also advocated, "keep young and beautiful". This sentiment reflects the norms of those societies which established such images of women: male dominated, with women relegated to the status of second-class citizens. Yet these views have also been perpetuated by women themselves, demonstrating either the result of social indoctrination, or an attempt to challenge such representations by using them as a reference point. However, "it is necessary first of all to understand how they work, and thus where to seek points of possible productive transformation" (Kuhn,1982,p.10). It could also be argued that until fairly recently, when it has become more socially acceptable for women to enter the professions and to be financially independent, many women would have accepted the roles which society determined in exchange for the protection of marriage.

Other predominant images of women include the trouble-makers who set themselves against male authority. Hera, the nagging wife of Zeus, can be seen as the archetype while, in the Bible, Lot's wife exemplifies the fate which awaits the disobedient wife.

In contrast, the patient, submissive, virtuous women (such as Penelope from classical literature and Ruth from the Bible) portrayed either as virgin or as wife and mother, were rewarded, usually with marriage (with male protection). The message was clear: to be a woman alone was not a desirable state. Male protection was essential but was only given, in general, to women who supposedly matched the ideal. "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies ... She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness" (Old Testament,Proverbs,Ch.31,V.10,27).

Contrasting images of women persisted and in the Middle Ages, where the Church influenced much of the literature produced, the virginal/virtuous woman and loving mother images were idealised and Mary of Nazareth emerged as a role-model to inspire devotion and suitable behaviour. She embodied all that was good or desirable in a woman (from a male point of view) and was believed to be the intercessor for man, although ultimately it was God, perceived as male, who granted salvation. In religious literature sexuality was equated with sin and the sensual image of Eve remained, probably as a reminder of the evils that unsubmissive women caused, and also, as William Blake's theory of contraries would suggest, to highlight Mary's goodness. Medieval secular literature also emphasised the romantic, idealised image of women. Like Mary, heroines were worshipped for their virtues, usually passivity, and their capacity to inspire men to do chivalrous deeds (Carter,1976).

However, with the waning of the Middle Ages, some literary images of women began to undergo a subtle process of change. Chaucer's 'doubling' of Griselda, of

The Clerk's Tale, and the Wife of Bath in The Canterbury Tales (c1387), is a notable example of this process. Griselda is a stereotyped, submissive, virtuous wife and a very flat character. On the other hand, while the Wife of Bath could still be categorised as a domineering wife who uses her sexuality as a weapon to gain economic control, she has a depth of character and individuality. This attempt to develop a psychological element within female characters is also discernible in the plays of Shakespeare. Despite much use of stereotypes, Shakespeare often invested his women characters with complex personalities, much closer to human beings than to myths.

By the eighteenth century, social realities were being woven into literature and the lives of lower class women were considered a fit subject matter. The reality of female dependence on male beneficence was emphasised and most writers (predominantly male) linked their female characters' fortune with their beauty or purity as in Daniel Defoe's Moll Flanders (1722). However, even women from the higher social orders had little choice in life and marriage was the prime objective. For single women there was no acceptable role in society, other than that of governess. Mary Wollstonecraft attempted to address the problem of female independence in A Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792), yet it was over a century later that women in Britain and America won the right to vote and gained a measure of economic independence.

The evolution of the novel allowed for a fuller development of female personality and psyche and Richardson's Pamela (1740-1) emphasises the value of chastity. It

demonstrates that a good girl, no matter how lowly in status, could attain the ultimate goal of a respectable marriage. The origins of this stereotyped image can be traced back to classical and biblical literature, yet it has undergone a subtle change. Richardson's role-model was not devoid of sexuality, but arousal was only possible within the confines of a suitable marriage. Thus the literature was attempting to reflect the moral code of its time where great emphasis was placed on inheritance and legitimacy, and chastity became a desirable commodity. Keith Thomas explores the development of what became popularly known as the "double standard" which supports the theory that for men sexual adventures outside marriage were "an offense, none the less a mild and pardonable one, but for a woman a matter of the utmost gravity" (Thomas,1959,p.195). A woman's virtue, therefore, assumed more importance than her beauty although for many writers the ideal woman had both.

Gradually the novel assumed a dominant position in English literature and plots often centred on a woman's search for a husband. Together with other media forms, the novel was used to reinforce, create and perpetuate images of women which reflected the moral and social codes of the period. Women writers of the early nineteenth century also tended to share this view of male-female relationships. Jane Austen's characters typify the values of the emerging middle class and are a prototype of the Victorian stereotyped heroine. However, although she seems to have accepted that marriage was the most important thing in life for most women, many of her female characters are not passive dolls. Elizabeth Bennet (Pride and Prejudice,1813) and Emma Woodhouse (Emma,1816), for example, possess an abundance of spirit together with all the socially acceptable female virtues.

In the early nineteenth century a dominant element of the formation of the English middle class was the construction of clear gender roles for women and men, and thus of 'femininity' and 'masculinity'. As Deirdre Beddoe (1987) highlights, The Perfect Lady was constructed as the desirable model for middle class women. This idealised model (which will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter) was well established by the late 1830s and flourished until near the end of the century, and has its origins in what Leonora Davidoff and Catherine Hall (1987) term the 'rise of the domestic ideology'. However, many women began to challenge this myth of the Perfect Lady as they sought control over their own lives. Women writers often utilised this image, and its successor, the New Woman, in an attempt to bring about changes in attitudes towards women's roles in society, as will be discussed later. In general, however, women characters in nineteenth century fiction who did not behave as society dictated, suffered misfortune.

Some of the more prominent images of Welsh women probably developed from, or as a reaction to, the publication of The Reports of the Commissions of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales (1847) (popularly known as *The Blue Books*). This document was commissioned after William Williams, Coventry's "Anglicized Welsh Member of Parliament" (Aaron,1991,p.185), expressed concern at the ignorance of the English language within the Welsh labouring classes. The government were growing increasingly concerned after a period of social unrest in Wales, highlighted by events such as the Merthyr Riots in 1831 and the Chartists' march on Newport in 1839. The Rebecca Riots of 1839-1844 had clearly demonstrated that, without a common language, control over the population was difficult and an increase in the

use of English (as the language of the ruling classes) was seen as the means by which such control could be gained.

The religious revivals of the eighteenth century had culminated in the separation of the Welsh Methodists from the Church of England in 1811, and Methodism had grown as "a religion of the people" (Aaron,1994(a),p.186), yet the Commission relied heavily on evidence from Anglican clergy. On consideration of earlier comments regarding the Church's attitudes and literature, and the antipathy of the Church towards Welsh Nonconformity, it would seem reasonable to suggest that a biased viewpoint or interpretation of events or situations was presented.

The *Report* highlighted the low standard of education of girls in Wales but projected its criticism beyond education and focused on the behaviour of Welsh women in general, severely censuring their moral behaviour, especially the social custom of bundling (courting in bed). Welsh religious practices were also cited as corrupting influences as they allowed young people to mix at, and more importantly after, prayer meetings. The overall images of Welsh women which emerged concerned both married and single women but reports of the former were generally more favourable. In Brecknockshire, it was reported that drunkenness extended to women but these were "mostly 20 or 25 years of age and unmarried" (*Report*,ii,p.58).

In Radnorshire, the Reverend John Price suggested various reasons for the lack of female morality and chastity but commented that "after marriage the women are generally well conducted" (ii,p.61). However, it was suggested that the

responsibility for the "want of chastity" and "laxity of morals" lay very firmly with mothers,

> for each generation will derive its moral tone in a great degree from the influences imparted by the mothers who reared them. Where these influences are corrupted at their very source, it is vain to expect virtues in the offspring.
>
> (*Report*,ii,p.57)

The development of strong mother figures in the literature of Wales would seem to be a direct counter attack to the Blue Books' statements. Such women were delineated as repositories for moral values and while the model of the Perfect Lady was English and middle class it appears to have been imported into Wales as a working class model.

In 1850, the production of a Welsh language periodical for women, *Y Gymraes (The Welshwoman)*, was an attempt from within Wales to address some of the issues of education and morality which had been raised by the *Report*. Siân Rhiannon Williams (1991) contends that the rationale behind the publication of this periodical (and some later magazines) was the creation of the perfect Welshwoman. However, many of these reformatory or educational texts which were directed at Welsh women were written by men or women from the upper or middle classes. Their underpinning philosophy (based on Welsh Nonconformity) was that if women were educated to be better wives and mothers, then they would exert an influence on their husbands and children: they would act as "a powerful agent in social reform" (Williams,1991,p.70).

Y Gymraes failed in 1851 and it was not until 1879 that *Y Frythones (The Female Briton)* was established as an independent magazine for women by a strong minded editor, Sarah Jane Rees ('Cranogwen') (Williams,1991). The thrust of this publication was again towards the exaltation of "marriage and motherhood" and clear gender roles. There was some acknowledgement of the concerns over woman's role in society in Wales which had arisen during the intervening years and this was expressed mainly with regard to education for women.

There had been little formal education for working class children in Wales before the 1870 Education Act; although there were informal sources such as family, religious groups and workhouse schools, there were few opportunities for girls (Beddoe,1987; Evans,1990). The educational curricula set clear gender roles with a focus on domestic instruction for girls. However, Deirdre Beddoe argues that post-1870 curricula for the working class were "*more* sex specific" (Beddoe,1987,p.55) and that

> Elementary education came to be seen as a vehicle of social and cultural control. It was not only perceived as a means of improving the working-class family by inculcating the skills of efficient wives and mothers but also as a means of training domestic servants for middle-class households.
>
> (Evans,1990,pp.11,12)

Popular novels of the period, written in English, also addressed some of these issues and will be discussed in the following chapters.

During the 1880s novels written in English were beginning to be serialised in the magazine *Red Dragon*. This was the only English language magazine published in

Wales during this period and was an attempt to create an "Anglo-Welsh ethos" which was, as Roland Mathias (1987) argues, ahead of its time. One of its earlier contributors was Allen Raine whose work will be considered in Chapter Three. By 1907 there had been a growth in the number of English language periodicals in Wales and the English press was, according to Eilir Evans, "the principal means of teaching Wales its politics, it is also the main educative factor in every other direction" (Evans,1907,p.347). He argued that it was only religion that supported the Welsh newspapers, yet he conceded that the "Welsh press is free from the lewdness and irreligion which mar a section of the English press" (p.347).

Raymond Garlick (1970) and Roland Mathias (1972;1987) trace the history and the influence of the English language in Wales from the twelfth century, prose writing in English from the sixteenth century, and the development of Anglo-Welsh Literature. They note that, in general, the publication of Caradoc Evans' My People in 1915 has been designated the "beginning of Anglo-Welsh Literature" (Garlick,1970), with writers such as Gwyn Jones, Rhys Davies, Jack Jones, Geraint Goodwin, and Hilda Vaughan, for example, being classified as the 'first wave' or 'first generation' of Anglo-Welsh novelists. Roland Mathias refers to the period as "the first flowering" of the genre (1987,p.87).

Although there is acknowledgement that women in Wales were also writing in English (Raymond Garlick cites four women publishing in the eighteenth century) and some, such as Margiad Evans and Hilda Vaughan are included under the umbrella of 'the first flowering', the contribution to the development of the genre by

a number of nineteenth century women writers appears to have been overlooked. While it is not the intention of this thesis to debate in detail what constitutes "Anglo-Welsh", it could be argued that if Caradoc Evans and other writers mentioned above are to be considered 'the first flowering', then writers such as Anne Beale, Amy Dillwyn and Allen Raine, for example, might be regarded as the seeds or root of this tradition. G F Adam (1948) proposes that novels written during the eighteenth and nineteenth century which have a partially Welsh setting or include Welsh characters are generally romances based on historical figures and have little of the regional element in them. However, he argues that writers such as Mrs A M Bennett, publishing between 1785 and 1794, "attempt a picture of real Welsh life, mostly in the middle and upper classes" (Adam,1948,p.22), and he suggests that they should be regarded as early regional novelists.

In Wales the novel written in English was slow in its development and, in general, Wales' first generation of Anglo-Welsh writers established the two main genres: the proletarian or industrial novel and the rural romance (Stephens,1986). The works of Jack Jones, Gwyn Jones, Rhys Davies, Lewis Jones and Richard Llewellyn fall into the former category and focus on the coalfield and mining communities during and after The Depression. For Wales this meant a decline in the metallurgical and coal industries and an almost complete shut-down of the export ports along the south coast. The standard of living fell dramatically and the period was also one of political unrest (Francis & Smith,1980). What these writers offered was a personal account of social hardship: a witnessing. The documentary style novels were

intended to arouse anger at the injustices suffered by these communities and at their "helplessness in the face of impersonal economic forces" (Stephens,1986,p.433).

However, these exterior novels are more concerned with events, and their effects, than with any detailed exploration of individuals' inner being. These works are mostly family sagas and they have as their pivot the strong mother-figure who is a steady, unchanging, moral anchor in a time of flux and uncertainty. Apart from 'Mam', women are of little significance in these novels and this image compares well with the English Perfect Lady. The doubles or unfavourable images hardly needed to be developed as the Blue Books had delineated them quite clearly for any writers who wished to use them. The emphasis is definitely male but "not only is the dominant image of Wales male and mass, it is also macho" (Beddoe,1986,p.227). These novels serve to reinforce the patriarchal code and largely ignore the fact that women in Wales were also waged workers (Rees,1988;Beddoe,1991).

The rural romances included the work of Hilda Vaughan, Margiad Evans and Geraint Goodwin, for example, and early works in this genre were generally border novels, whereas later works were often set in rural, Welsh-speaking Wales and include some of the novels of Rhys Davies. Stephens (1986) argues that unlike the proletarian novel, the rural novel focuses on personal relationships and character, rather than on community, and presents a narrow or restricted view of social and cultural differences within Wales.

When the seeds of Anglo-Welsh literature were being sown, the women in Wales who managed to secure the publication of their work (with English publishers) were generally from the middle or upper classes. Working class women would have been unlikely to have had either the time or the education to write and their experiences have, to a greater extent, been lost. As Deirdre Beddoe (1986) asserts, they form part of the hidden history of Wales and the

> treatment of women and their concerns ... has been ... inadequate and ... derogatory; women have been subjected to a number of stereotyped roles from the beshawled harpist to the stolid Valleys Mam.
>
> (Curtis,1986,p.11)

Annette Kuhn (1982) argues that "feminism has regarded ideas, language and images as crucial in shaping women's lives" (p.12), and that women have been influenced by the promotion of the "impossible image of ideal womanhood" (p.3). With the recent publication of a number of texts which focus exclusively on the lives and works of Welsh women, it is to be hoped that this "hidden history" and distorted picture of Welsh women will be rectified. "The notion of the female sex as entirely powerless can be challenged, though in doing so, female perspectives have to be recognised as being as valid as those of men" (John,1984,p.87).

CHAPTER TWO

2. THE MOLLUSC MARY AND THE WELSH MAM 1850-1889

The stereotyped image of the Perfect Lady, as outlined in Chapter One, was a powerful model of "ideal femininity" (Beddoe,1987). From the early nineteenth century increasing industrialisation and a desire within the middle classes for social stability led to an emphasis on the importance of the family unit, with the mother as the central, but dependent, mainstay of the home. Males were portrayed as the supporters, the breadwinners and their role was clearly in the public world. Although women were relegated to a domestic or private world, their role, supported and sustained by religious principles, was given a measure of importance in the development and continuation of "good order" (Aaron,1994a).

The image of the Perfect Lady was widely propagated and its overriding principle was the recognition that women were inferior to men and should be content to accept this. The Perfect Lady was, of course, married and marriage was established as the goal of all women (Beddoe,1987). However, it could be argued that spinsterhood gave women some advantages such as the right to own and inherit property, to control their own earnings and to have custody of their illegitimate children. Once a woman married she became the property of her husband and had no legal existence. Until The Married Woman's Property Act of 1882, any assets which she had passed to her husband, and their children became his property also. Legally (and socially), divorce was almost impossible (Brophy, & Smart,1986) and "inconvenient" or "wayward" wives could be imprisoned or committed to asylums.

The Industrial Revolution affected the lives of middle class women and working class women quite differently. In England, large numbers of working class women moved into the factories, into the heart of production. Elizabeth Roberts (1988) questions the reliability of census data and argues that much women's work went unrecorded. Women had always worked, as "spinners, dressmakers, embroiderers, straw-plait and lacemakers; they had undertaken immense amounts of housekeeping and child rearing" (p.13), but it was the public appearance of wage-earning women that gave rise to criticism, and this was especially harsh towards working wives and mothers. Working class women were caught in a contradictory situation: wanted as cheap labour by employers (and often there was the real need to work to supplement family income), yet pressurised by a domestic ideology to stay at home. Although this ideology had developed within the middle classes, it was actively promoted to the working class and affected attitudes towards nineteenth and twentieth century women.

Inaccuracies in nineteenth century Welsh census data have also led to "a gross underestimation of women's activities" (Rees,1988,p.120), but in general a greater proportion of women were employed in domestic service and agriculture in Wales than in England (Williams & Jones,1982). While the novelists Anne Beale and Amy Dillwyn (whose work will be discussed in this chapter) both identify the need for access to higher education as a prelude to professionalism for women, the main references to paid work for women in their novels concern domestic service, the labour imposed by the workhouse in return for accommodation, and governessing, which supports the picture of a limited range of employment opportunities for the majority of women in Wales.

During the 1850s and 1860s coalmining developed in the Rhondda area of south Wales. While this was a predominantly male dominated area of employment, a very small number of women were still employed in the mines despite the 1842 Mines Act (Jones, 1992). A small proportion of women worked at the pit-brow or in the brickworks and during the 1860s and 1870s images of these workers as noble savages prompted angry responses from girls who wanted to be seen "as part of the respectable working class" (John,1984,p.81). However, ordinary women's role in mining communities and specifically in the Rhondda was seen in the same light as that of the Perfect Lady of the English middle classes (Jones,1991).

"Mam" was the home-support and budget manager (with a constantly changing level of income), yet the conditions of hardship which these women encountered were almost as testing as those of the miners underground. They endured poor housing and sanitation, overcrowding and a constant battle against dirt. Angela John's (1984) interviews with miners (and sons) support the concept that the women "organised their lives around the public demands of the miners" (Williams,1994) and were encouraged to accept this as their duty. Periodicals such as *Y Gymraes* also propagated the image of the Mam as "the Angel in the Home - everything that is pure and good in Wales - indeed, she is Wales" (Bianchi,1994).

It can be seen, therefore, that the Perfect Lady was an idealised and restrictive stereotype created to keep women economically dependent and unproductive (except for childbearing). However, many women began to resent the lifestyle that this image dictated, and from about the 1860s women's demands for 'rights' increased.

Yet it was predominantly women from the expanded middle classes who were challenging the Victorian stereotype and all she dictated. They sought to "redefine women's social position" (Beddoe,1987,p.28). The suffrage activities of women in Wales have not received the same degree of attention as their English sisters' until recently (Cook & Evans,1991) and, as Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan (1991) notes, support for the suffrage movement in Wales was more prominent in the anglicised areas. It was during the early part of the twentieth century that suffrage activities in Wales became more organised, as will be discussed in Chapter Three.

The main areas targeted for reform were in relation to control over property and income, the access to higher education and subsequent admission to professional occupation (although, as mentioned in Chapter One, W G Evans (1990) argues that the most that working class girls could hope for was a domestically-orientated education), and the vote. Many single women, especially those from the middle classes, rejected the idealised image of woman and rebelled against the role model of the Perfect Lady. The "social impotence and frustration of the suburban daughter-at-home, the 'mollusc Mary'" (Lewis,1987,p.41) was the subject of much feminist writing but the media counteracted this by fostering a new and cruel stereotype: the 'New Woman'. One of the major magazines to employ such sadistic imagery was Punch, whose cartoons ridiculed the women's movements and sought to portray all women who demanded 'rights' as unfeminine and, by implication, unmarriageable. Two Welsh woman who suffered such media attacks were Amy Dillwyn, a successful industrialist, novelist, literary critic and pioneer feminist, and the novelist Rhoda

Broughton who was satirised as "Miss Rhody Dendron" in 1876 (Kenyon-Thompson,1993). The independent woman was seen as a threat to men and the function of the parody of the New Woman was to coax or bully women out of the idea of emancipation.

Other vehicles used for raising public awareness of the changes taking place and the inherent dangers or benefits (depending on the writer's point-of-view) of female emancipation, were the novel and the theatre. These were not as blatantly hostile as the Punch cartoons, but in general the behaviour of women who challenged convention led either to personal disaster, or adversely affected the lives of those around them. However, some writers were more sympathetic, or realistic, and they allowed their heroines the freedom of rebellion without an apparent downfall, thus subtly changing the image of women. Henrik Ibsen's play A Doll's House, (1879), is a prime example of this. Nora's desire for education and emancipation reflected the tide of movement in society by women who were realising that there was strength in numbers and who were beginning to voice their opinions. However, in much English and Welsh literature, the "Angel in the Home" was exalted and was influential until the turn of the century (Evans,1990).

A prolific writer in Wales during this period was, in fact, an English governess. Anne Beale (1816-1900) lived for many years at or near Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire and was popular as a writer for girls. Many of her novels are set in Wales and attempt to deal with the culture of, and changes within, the country. They illustrate various social, religious and legal attitudes towards women, but they also deal with

a wide range of issues, including dissension, industrialisation and the effects of strike action, education, temperance, the slave trade, missionary work, nationalism, and language and culture. Her novels indicate her awareness of the changes which took place in Welsh society, of the continuing process of anglicization and of the role of education in this process (Dearnley,1989).

Her first prose work, The Vale of The Towey, was published in 1844 and focusses on the rural society of Wales. As there is only one location, the short stories create a "continuous narrative and may be considered ... as marking a significant stage in the development of the novel in English" (Stephens,1986,p.34). Thus her work is of relevance not only in terms of this thesis, but also within the canon of Anglo-Welsh Literature as she introduces "a number of themes and images that were to become commonplace in later Anglo-Welsh fiction" (Dearnley,1989,p.4). The most significant of these were a miners' strike and pit explosion, which are dealt with in some detail in The Queen o'the May (1883), and could have been influenced by knowledge of the mine disasters at Risca (Newport, 1860), Ferndale (Rhondda, 1867) and the 1873 strike by a number of south Wales coalminers (Thomas & Roberts,1936). Moira Dearnley (1989) also contends that the author manipulates the fiction to allow for the introduction of details of Welsh life and traditions and that in all of her novels set in Wales she introduces a picturesque Welsh costume. Although the novels attempt to some degree to deal with the Welsh peasantry, this is an "external view" (Williams,1980), and thus the reader becomes aware of the class-consciousness of the author (and by implication of the age), and the importance of physiognomy (Dearnley,1989).

The Vale of the Towey was set in a village in the neighbourhood of Llandeilo Vawr and the inhabitants were used as models for the book's characters. William Davies (1858) wrote that while some of the characters were "a little exaggerated ... She is a minute and clever observer of men and manners and particularly of domestic life" (p.46). Her other novels which have a Welsh setting may also provide the reader with an insight into the position of, and attitudes towards, women in Wales.

Most of Anne Beale's works focus on the self-development of the heroine in a similar way to the writings of Jane Austen, and she also allows them a certain freedom of expression and individuality. An early novel, Simplicity and Fascination (1855), (which opens in the 1820s and has a partial Welsh setting) clearly demonstrates the different chores, leisure pursuits and opportunities for and attitudes towards education between males and females. The girls darn and repair clothes, or knit, while the boys draw or read. "The other two children, a boy and a girl, are twins ... a pile of lesson books lies unopened by the side of the boy ... and near the girl is a piece of needlework" (i,p.5).

Jessie Burton is portrayed as innocent, pure-minded, loving, gentle, truthful and devoted, in comparison with her sister, Anna, who is beautiful but proud and thoughtless. Anna rejects the offer to train as a governess, as she believes that marriage to an officer will provide her with a better life. The romanticised imagery of this novel, which supported the ideology of the day, motivated William Davies (1858) to proclaim that no-one could read about Jessie without "a feeling of

thankfulness, that there are such beings to gladden and brighten many a home" (p.47).

Simplicity and Fascination received favourable reviews for its high moral sentiment and the reader is aware of religious overtones in all of Anne Beale's novels. Many have heavy, moralistic passages which stand out as lectures or patronising homilies, rather than supporting the storyline; Beale emphasises her awareness of the popularity of the novel and its potential as an agent of reform, or as a guide to correct behaviour for young women: ""There is no evil in a fine, healthy novel, my dear girl. Many of them are better than sermons"" (Beale,1869,ii,p.158). This sentiment reflects the attitude of a number of nineteenth authors of fiction for adolescent girls (Rowbotham,1989).

The characters and plot of Country Courtships (1869) are developed in a saga spanning almost thirty years and the harsh moralistic tone has mellowed. The characters demonstrate depth of feeling, although within the bounds of propriety. The conventional, idealised role of women is challenged by the heroine Mara, when she refuses to obey her father and marry a local minister (as she has already secretly married her childhood sweetheart who has been lost at sea). Mr Vaughan's attitude reinforces the view of woman as an ornament or a helper:

> "Mariana is better suited to Edwin than I am, father, and would make a better minister's wife ..."
> Mr Vaughan ... knew that what she said as to her sister's fitness was true ...
> "I should not make Edwin happy."
> "Why not? A humble and obedient wife makes any man happy. Such was your mother."
>
> (Beale,1869,i,p.35)

Mara is allowed conventional happiness at the end of the novel but she has to wait over twenty years, and undergoes many trials and hardships. However, the main point is that she overcomes these trials by her own determination and actually succeeds as a (supposedly) single woman. Society's attitudes towards her vary, but in general reflect the prevailing Victorian stance. Her sister, with whom she is doubled, is the virtuous, patient, submissive daughter, the 'mollusc Mary', who puts duty first, but the author encourages the reader to reflect on whether this is a natural state of womanhood and, if not, on how an imposed patriarchal code of conduct might cause severe emotional and physical distress to women:

> Mariana Vaughan was very unlike her sister. Her temperament was retiring and nervously sensitive ... The constant strain on her to do her duty by others and to please her father, in many ways that were wholly at war with her own feelings, made her manners stiff and constrained.
>
> (Beale,1869,i,p.62)

However, her goodness and patience are rewarded when the minister proposes to her. "Edwin heard and looked at the gentle girl. She was very pale and seemed almost a portion of the pure, white world around" (ii,p.79). Yet up to this point her life appears as sterile as the snow.

The author also considers the quality of women's lives. Despite her father's opposition, Mara succeeds in obtaining paid work as a governess in the local poorhouse, while her sister runs the family home. Mara argues, "what woman has peace! Man forbids that. Husband, father, brother, or lover is the cause of every woe that every woman suffers. I see that daily" (ii,p.18). The narrator supports this view: "Men always blame women for everything, especially for the tears of their children ... Men also leave every domestic grievance for the women" (iii,p.119).

Mariana's character also embodies the unrest that the routine of home-life imposed on women and the lack of employment opportunities for them. "Oh, Mara! and you are engaged in great work that lays hold of your mind, while I only go daily over the dull routine of life, with no hope this side of the grave" (i,p.297).

One young woman who achieves her objectives is Angharad Herbert, the anglicised daughter of a retired, Welsh sea-captain. "She had returned from a finishing school in London, accomplished and very English, and was, besides, a spoilt pet and a beauty" (i,p.49). She wants to marry a man considerably older than herself but he thinks she is too headstrong. However,

> He had just seen her in a new light. Hitherto she had been to him contradictory, teazing, attractive; now she was gentle, tender, womanly; and whatever effect the charm of manner may have upon the mind, it is these softer graces that win the heart.
>
> (Beale,1869,i,p.259)

This male point-of-view reinforces earlier female imagery and the notion of correct behaviour for young women. Angharad has spirit without waywardness, she is educated (in preparation for married life) and wants the convention of marriage but without parental arrangement or interference. Her suitability as a wife appears to have been increased after her education (and anglicization); this passage reinforces the argument that the process of anglicization of Wales was considered by the author, and by the ruling classes, as beneficial (Aaron,1994b).

The question of desirable female qualities is mostly raised by the male characters in Anne Beale's fiction. In Rose Mervyn: A Tale of the Rebecca Riots (1889), a woman's beauty is frequently perceived as the means to her happiness. When

Edwyna, the younger daughter of the Mervyn family, asserts her intention to remain unmarried and manage a farm, she is warned that "the men will prevent that ... You haven't got your curls and roses for nothing" (p.167). However, the narrator contents that "beauty is but skin deep, yet we acknowledge its influence" but asserts that while "we cannot make our looks ... we may make our fortunes" (p.179).

Many of the younger, female characters in Anne Beale's works challenge the concept of parental choice of marriage partner. In The Pennant Family (1876), Daisy "could not find it in her heart to wish her [Lady Mona] married contrary to her inclination" (p175). In Rose Mervyn, Rose's father makes his expectations clear. "I hear you have had an offer which will make you mistress of a respectable house ... I hope you mean to accept it at once without any shilly-shallying" (p.67). As one comes to expect from Anne Beale's heroines, Rose does not accept this offer, but chooses her own husband. Marriages arranged or directed by parents are rarely allowed to take place in Anne Beale's fiction.

Mr Vaughan, father of Mara and Mariana in Country Courtships, represents patriarchal, authoritarian, and religious points-of-view and attitudes towards women. When Mara returns home after a period of living-in at the workhouse, he warns her, "I shall part with you no more, unless it be to consign you to another protector, namely, a husband" (i,p.315). He maintains that "Women are ever empty and vain ... they should learn in silence ... Women may be wordy and still empty ... they are too often sacks full of chaff" (i,p.306), but Mara challenges this view whenever possible. In the reconciliation scene at the end of the novel, "the scales fell from his

eyes", and "even Mr Vaughan grew pleasant, and silently acknowledged that the secret of happiness lay in domestic peace, and family union" (iii,p.285). The author appears to suggest, however, that family unity cannot be brought about through oppression and subjugation.

Another character who shares Mr Vaughan's images of women is Evan, Derwen Fach, great-grandfather of May, heroine of The Queen o' the May (1882), a novel for girls. "Remember the curse. It was female curiosity that brought sin into the world" (p11), he maintains, but one of the village women challenges him and argues, "Stiff's the word for you, mind and body". May, who is half English, is to be raised by her Welsh great-grandparents, and Evan notes that she is "quick enough of apprehension and imitation, and could now be trained into a useful woman" (p.49). His dominance over the extended family, their reactions to this and the effects of social and religious indoctrination, is illustrated in one instance through the narrator's comments on Evan's wife, Peggy:

> This was a thrust at Evan, against whose somewhat arbitrary commands she would have occasionally rebelled if she could; but she was too obedient a wife, and had too wholesome a fear of her husband, to do so openly.
>
> (Beale,1882,p52)

In Rose Mervyn, Mr Mervyn considers Rose to be deficient because, while she "was able to use a coracle as skilfully as the fishermen" (p.10), she was "not as skilful at domestic duties as she ought to be" (p.27). Her father maintains that educated girls do not make good wives, an argument levied by Victorian society against those middle-class women who sought education (Evans,1990). He blames Mrs Mervyn for neglecting her female responsibilities; had she "brought up Rose to understand

household work ... Rose would be content to make a respectable match" (p.122). He also contends that "we poor sinners of the masculine gender are supposed to be the lords of the creation" (p.161), thus reinforcing biblical support for the inequality of the species.

This picture of women, and especially daughters, as male possessions occurs frequently in Anne Beale's fiction and reflects the changing attitude of women towards their legal 'existence'. Daughters are portrayed as chattels, bargaining assets, or even as liabilities when they do not, or will not, marry. In general, females are regarded as a commodity whose value or status is raised or lowered in accordance with their marriage partner's position in society, and one mother remarks that all women are "Puppets! puppets! nothing else" (Beale,1889,p.173).

Despite the romantic nature of the works, the author demonstrates her awareness of the changes in the position of women in society and of the attitudes of that society. By the 1860s and 1870s, in which period The Queen o' the May is set, some women had become doctors and some were attending university courses, although it was not until 1878 that London University was officially opened to women. (In 1885 Frances Hoggan was registered as Wales' first qualified doctor but it cannot be assumed that Anne Beale was aware of her before this date). Evan believes in the status quo, and through his character Anne Beale voices the fears and resentment felt by many:

> "They are telling me that women are taking men's places nowadays, and beginning to be doctors and lecturers, and all sorts that don't become 'em! Shame for 'em! I say; shame for 'em! Better stop at home and mind their own pots and kettles than go meddling with other people's."
>
> (Beale,1882,p.98)

It is left to the younger generation, and principally to May, to challenge social conventions and Evan's strong religious principles. Even though he was "for women keeping in their places, and minding their own business" (p.212), May's inherent innocence softens him. She is not portrayed as a stereotyped new woman but she encourages him to accept that people (and this includes women) can be allowed some pleasure in life without incurring the wrath of God, and that it is wrong to ignore God-given talents. William Davies (1858) contends that the novels of Anne Beale use the same process for "the humanizing of the human heart" (p.47), thus substantiating an argument that Anne Beale's primary objective was to write novels as "a vehicle for moral teaching" (Wheeler,1989,p.9).

May trains as a singer in London, although at the end of the novel she marries her Welsh cousin, Meredith. He was a mine worker but has been educated and become the mine manager. While this alliance satisfies Evan, it is somewhat unusual in Anne Beale's novels as, although she allows mixed marriages between English or part-English women and Welsh men, the male line is usually descended from ancient Welsh Princes or Royalty, as is the case with Mr Mervyn in Rose Mervyn and Caradoc Pennant of The Pennant Family (1876). The author's frequent use of mixed-race marriages reinforces an assumption made in the thirteenth century that "in the English alliance is Wales's only hope of tranquillity and true independence and civilisation" (Rowbotham,1989,p.157).

The Pennant Family (set in a much earlier period than the other works) raises the issues of female education and inheritance, but the author's sympathy for the Welsh

language, customs and traditions is clear. She considers the language issue and the concept of colonialism and advocates a union between the countries rather than English dominance. She seeks tolerance on both sides and recommends a policy of bilingualism to cement such an alliance. In general, Anne Beale implies that co-operation and integration are necessary for any stable society. This may be a reflection of religious interests and influences or a desire for some kind of social control or improvement. The notion of acceptance of one's position in society and the social responsibilities of the higher classes was a common motif in much Victorian fiction for girls (Rowbotham,1989).

The ship-wrecked heroine, Daisy, is raised by the Welsh-speaking Pennants, portrayed as "the exemplary product of Welsh rural life" (Dearnley,1989,p.30). Daisy only speaks English at first but she is allowed to accompany the Pennant boys to the local school which had been set up privately by an English scholar in retreat. When Mr ap Adam realises that Daisy can read, recite, and say her multiplication tables, he remarks to Caradoc Pennant,

> "Carad, we will make a man of her - or a Lady Jane Grey,- and teach her Greek and Latin. She shall be my sixth boy ... Poor innocent! Her mother must have taught her ... After all, women are not born fools; it is want of education that makes them so."
>
> (Beale,1876,p.69)

Later, when Daisy's natural father remarks on her simplicity and innocence, it is considered, from a male character's point-of-view, that this has developed despite her cleverness. However, it is made clear that Mr ap Adam "took care that she had a pure and healthy literature" (p.336). The author contrasts Daisy, educated as a

'boy', with Lady Mona, the Earl's daughter, who would have been educated in accordance with the principles of the gentry, as a prelude to a suitable marriage. However, Lady Mona leads an unfulfilled, unproductive, and unhappy life. This contrasting possibly reflects the debates on suitable education for females (a number of which took place during this novel's production), and also the medical theories which argued that women's physical make-up would prevent them from absorbing higher education (Atkinson,1978). As mentioned above, by the 1870s some women were attending universities and so the evolutionary arguments mutated to focus on possible detrimental effects on women's health and especially on their ability to reproduce.

These comments on schooling, and on the education of girls in general, are all the more pertinent when one considers that the author was a governess and would have been well aware of the type of education which she was expected to deliver. (Elementary schooling for working class children was quite different, and there was little formal education before 1870, when the Education Act allowed for the opening of Board Schools. By 1876, schooling was compulsory, and by 1891, was free. The main thrust of the education of these girls, as discussed in Chapter One, was to socialise them into their future roles of wives and mothers, and to provide the employment market with a steady supply of domestic servants). Amy Dillwyn also reacted to the educational debates and, in Chloe Arguelle, a female guest at a Foreign Office function argues that a clause should be introduced into the Education Act

> "to have girls instructed in the rudiments of smith's work ... how glorious it would be to have a college devoted to that purpose! We might call it the Defoe College ... to commemorate that great man who was so far in advance of his age as to have proposed an

> institution of a college for the education of women, and to have endeavoured to reform the position of women by insisting on their right to share the advantages then confined to men."
>
> (Dillwyn,1881,i,pp.108-109)

Moira Dearnley (1989) cites Census returns which record that Anne Beale was living in Carmarthenshire in 1841 where she would have been well placed to comment on the Welsh (and her own) response to *The Report* of 1847. Jane Aaron (1995) suggests that Anne Beale explores the concept of an exotic, wild Wales where behaviour was more likely to be uninhibited and passionate. However, if a woman mirrored English manners and had greater self control, she gained respect and was more likely to attain the rewards of life (generally a good marriage). In Rose Mervyn, probably the most romantic of Anne Beale's novels, Nature is seen as an agent of human development.

> It was no wonder that Rose was patriotic and romantic, with the shy, wild patriotism and romance of youth; for she had been cradled and trained amid scenes of beauty, poetry, and legendary lore.
>
> (Beale,1889,p.25)

> ... even in the nineteenth century there were still remote spots in mountainous districts where nature held sway over human beings; and where grace, beauty, and innocence could be found, even though partially beyond the grasp of modern etiquette and civilization.
>
> (Beale,1889,p.80)

Amy Dillwyn echoes this concept in her first novel, The Rebecca Rioter.

> Do not people's natures, more or less, take after the places where they are born and pass their lives? ... If I am right in this idea, it will account for the Upper Killay folk being a rather rough set.
>
> (Dillwyn,1880,i,pp,1-2)

but lack of education is also considered as a factor in human development as "None of the children ... knew what going to school meant, and ... ran wild" (i,p.6).

Anne Beale's representation of Wales and the Welsh is mostly objective yet sympathetic, and overall she endeavours to portray Welsh society fairly and at all levels, yet her allegiance to England and the Anglican Church is clear. Her female characters are mainly a complex mixture of traits, although she uses stereotypes to some degree; there are several women who continuously sit around the house embroidering, reading novels, or are invalids (this concept will be discussed later in the chapter). Peasant life is often picturesque yet she does not ignore poverty and poor social conditions, although these are mostly confined to the industrialised areas of south Wales.

Anne Beale's concern for propriety in her novels was not shared by the Welsh-born writer Rhoda Broughton. She became renowned for the forwardness of her writing and her popularity earned her the title of "*the Queen of the Circulating Library*" (Roberts,1993). Her novels parodied the fads of fashion of the day and displayed the freedom of speech which was to be more widely employed later in the century. Her father had encouraged her ability for classics and modern languages and when, as a writer and confirmed spinster, she moved to Oxford she fought to gain acceptance into the male dominated circle. However, in the novel Belinda (1883), her satirical use of the people and situations which she observed in respectable Victorian Oxford created a scandal but this only served to increase her readership (Roberts,1993). An earlier novel, Red As A Rose Is She (1870), also used satire to castigate what she perceived as Welsh hypocrisy, especially in relation to religion where "Spite is permissible on the Sabbath though novels are not" (Roberts,1993).

Despite her Welsh birthplace and the fact that all of her early writing was done in Wales, the majority of the novels do not focus specifically on Wales and her work has not, until recently, been studied in great depth. However, Rhoda Broughton: Profile of a Novelist (1993), written by Marilyn Wood, is the first biography of the author and seems set to rekindle interest in this writer whose portrayal of, and attitudes towards, the lives of her female characters would appear to mark her as a "significant figure in the early history of the women's movement even if she maintained a detached indifference to the campaign" (Kenyon-Thompson,1993). Yet Jane Shilling (1993), argues that Not Wisely But Too Well and Cometh Up As A Flower (both 1867, reprinted in 1993), demonstrate "truly venomous anti-Semitism". The author's antagonism towards the Welsh is also obvious in the former of these novels where "the Welsh are but grubby, compliant underlings" who speak "the ugliest of all ugly languages" (Aaron,1994b,pp.35-36).

Amy Dillwyn (1845-1935) was another Welsh spinster who, for a brief period, used novel writing to express her frustration at the restrictions which society imposed on women's lives. She became a pioneer for women's rights in industrial and public life but her unorthodox views and life-style earned her a reputation for eccentricity. David Painting's (1986) biography gives a full account of her life but there is little significance attached to the six novels which were written over a period of twelve years. "Her fiction is seldom as interesting as her diaries where the real woman is allowed far more emotional release than any of her fictional heroines" (p72). It may well be that her own experiences overshadow that of her writing but an appraisal of the heroines which this independent, strong-minded woman created, and a

comparison of the situations, opportunities and experiences of her characters with those of her own and other women's, offer the reader an additional insight into Amy Dillwyn's methods of coping with society's expectations of women.

She was born into one of Glamorgan's leading families and was an intelligent, strong willed child. She was educated by a succession of governesses and at eighteen she was launched into society. It was expected that she would marry Llewellyn Thomas of Llwynmadoc, the sole heir of a wealthy land owner and colliery magnate thus making a matrimonial alliance between two powerful families (Jones,1992). From her diaries it is evident that she desired more than a marriage of convenience, but she finally accepted Llewellyn's proposal in October 1863. However, by February 1864, Llewellyn had contracted smallpox and died.

Amy Dillwyn realised that she needed to do something worthwhile with her life but became caught up in social engagements and community work. She played an active role as schoolteacher in Killay, but the squalor of many of the villagers' homes and the lack of personal hygiene in the children distressed her. She was also concerned with reports of "the state of intoxication into which the men get on Sunday" (Painting,1986,p.54). Anne Beale's narrator also comments directly on the state of intoxication of the miners in Queen o'The May (1882) and reflects on marriages within the mining community and on the influence which women supposedly had over their menfolk:

> The colliers marry early ... and consider themselves capable of supporting a wife ... Leah ... was a good housekeeper, and it was prophesied would make a careful and managing wife; which, unfortunately, these young women too frequently were not. Indeed

> the untidy households at home too often drove the husbands to the public-house.
>
> (Beale,1882,p.45)

Anne Beale weaves the question of temperance into several novels but it is significant that neither of these women comment on, or characterise, the drunkenness of Welsh women of which the Blue Books apparently found so much evidence. They were almost certainly both aware of the early English and possibly of the Welsh Temperance Movements and of the few female groups established from the 1830s onwards (Lloyd-Morgan,1991), but neither writer uses this issue as central focus in their novels.

Amy Dillwyn was concerned for the community as a whole and her anxiety at social conditions and inequalities is reflected very clearly in The Rebecca Rioter:

> If the rich would try to civilise the poor - not merely by giving them money ... but by going amongst them with real and unaffected sympathy that forgets differences of rank ... then poor men would not be imbued with that feeling of natural enmity and distrust
>
> (Dillwyn,1880,ii,p.219)

However, she was well aware of the social mores of the period and of the different attitudes towards the sexes:

> Her brother Harry ... found it easy to mix with all classes of people ... The crucial difference, of course, was that he was a man. No respectable woman could have done what he did and still keep the reputation essential to a proper place in mid-Victorian society. Shrewd as she was Amy would not have missed the lesson to be learnt - that women were seldom treated fairly in a male-orientated world - and consequently her latent feminism began to grow stronger from this time onwards.
>
> (Painting,1986,p.58)

In 1866 her mother died and Dillwyn took over the role of mistress of Hendrefoilan. Through her father's work and London contacts she met many influential and intellectual people. She began to regret her lack of a university education and became increasingly concerned with the concepts of duty and social roles and of appearance and reality. This is reflected in a diary entry, "Oh! we all play our game in the world but we all come off the stage at night in our own rooms" (Painting,1986,p.41), and in a number of her novels as will be illustrated below.

In 1870, and again in 1874, she refused a proposal of marriage from a local vicar because she would not marry for the sake of it. She argued, "Why must women always marry? If I am to be a lone old woman, so be it!" and

> having absorbed herself in reading original thinkers as diverse as Pusey and John Stuart Mill she had no intention of becoming a vicar's lady ... dedicated to Sunday school teaching at Killay and serving gruel to the poor.
>
> (Painting,1986,p.65)

As she approached the age of thirty, generally considered to be the age of confirmation of spinsterhood, she believed that she had no real function in life. Her health began to deteriorate, probably psychosomatically, and she hardly left Hendrefoilan, opting out of all social obligations. Lorna Duffin (1978) argues that the ideal Perfect Lady (and, presumably, the 'mollusc Mary') was a "symbol of conspicuous leisure and the agent of conspicuous consumption" (p26). It was the stifling inactivity and purposelessness of life that led many women to believe that they were useless or incapable and in time, disabled, and many nineteenth century novels reflected this trend. Anne Beale employs the stereotyped invalid in Queen

o'The May but ascribes the condition to a collier's wife, 'Lizbeth, who "was an invalid, and, being very nervous, was much considered, and allowed to have her own way in everything" (p.44). Amy Dillwyn castigates such a character (although of a different class) in Chloe Arguelle, where Mrs Farren of Hazel Hall was

> timid, nervous ... not in strong health ... The daily ordering of dinners and seeing to house-hold affairs was a heavy burden ... any greater mental exertion ... would probably have given her brain fever.
> (Dillwyn,1881,i,p.213)

Such disdain from the narrator might well reflect the author's revolt against the pit into which she appeared to be falling.

Duffin also contends that this image of woman as weak or delicate and prone to illness only survived because it had the support of the medical profession, an almost totally male occupation until the late nineteenth century. However, as women began to dispute their conventional roles, medical theories were constructed to combat the challenge. Briefly, these can be condensed into the basic precept that all specifically female functions were pathological. Puberty, menstruation, pregnancy and menopause were viewed as afflictions. Considering the lack of birth control this would mean that most women would be ill for the major part of their lives; Lady Charlotte Guest's journals reflect her awareness of the limitations that pregnancy put on a woman's aspirations in life (John,1991). It was also in the interest of medical practitioners to promote this image as there was a considerable financial element at stake. The affluent, middle class lady 'in decline' would have needed many visits, but little treatment. For many of the poorer classes, doctors were not affordable and there is no evidence of working class women suffering such declines or 'faints', except perhaps from malnutrition or overwork. When necessary, home remedies

would be used and in The Rebecca Rioter, Amy Dillwyn relates how "Betty Perkins of Penclawdd" knew as much, if not more, than any doctor and "never took a penny from anyone unless she cured him" (i,p.35).

It was from thirty five to forty seven years of age that Amy Dillwyn wrote her six novels and many critical reviews. Clearly, the novels were based on her own experiences but they were in a curious way prophetic. She was well read and was conscious of the rise of unrest among women of the middle and upper classes who were seeking equality and questioning their lack of control over their own lives. She wrote the novels in an attempt to challenge what she saw as the unfairness of the position of women in society; all of her works revolve around the central theme of social reform. Each novel has a different focus but she attempted to draw particular attention to the suppression of women. She wanted to convey the message that it was time women stopped thinking of themselves as "possessions of men" and stood up for their rights as "intelligent human beings" (Painting,1986,p.77).

The stories are autobiographical in that they portray intelligent women who are unable to find a rewarding place for themselves in a traditional, male-dominated society. The heroines are not often stereotyped beauties and it is their straightforwardness which is accentuated, together with their lack of, and impatience with, simpering and social pretensions: "Anything that smacked of pretension and condescension was anathema to Amy. She did her duty gallantly, keeping her innermost thoughts for her diary" (Painting,1986,p.41).

Her heroines demonstrate the courage needed to defend unorthodox convictions and frequently refuse to marry for the sake of propriety, to become a husband's ornament or, as David Painting remarks, "a doll in a doll's house". Although they are portrayed as personally rebellious, there is no suggestion of sexual misconduct. They are not without passion (not asexual as the Perfect Lady was supposed to be) but they are virtuous and matter-of-fact about romance and there is little sentimentality in these works. Female passion is also suggested but never elaborated in Anne Beale's work. Whenever emotions are aroused, the scene is closed by leaving it to the reader's imagination. Yet there is no suggestion, at any level, of Blue Books immorality, and there is no reference by either writer to prostitution or the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866, 1869 and their repeal in 1886. Perhaps this is not surprising, as prostitutes came mainly from the class of women not dealt with by either of these novelists (Walkovitz,1982), and also as prostitution tended to be associated with public houses (Lloyd-Morgan,1994), another social element which was not dealt with in any great detail.

Although the aim of Amy Dillwyn's writing was to make a stand for female emancipation, she realised that direct propaganda would probably alienate her readers. She attempted to exploit the current fashion for daring fiction and devised a series of rather implausible plots. There are burglaries, murders and fires, and she was not opposed to using what was considered as "racy slang" (in A Burglary (1883), she writes of someone "sloping off with the tin"). She employed humour to lighten the novels and, like Dickens, she was not averse to using melodrama or even knockabout comedy. Her main concern was with women's position in society and

she attempted to redress the balance by allowing her heroines the freedom and equality which she believed every woman should have. However, her first (and possibly best) novel is set in Swansea at the time of the Rebecca Riots. It is the later novels which deal with contemporary society and while the Welsh element is less obvious, her progressive outlook is clear.

The Rebecca Rioter (1880) is an intriguing fictionalised autobiography, written from the point of view of one of the rioters, Evan Williams. Unlike Anne Beale's romantic work Rose Mervyn: A Tale of the Rebecca Riots, Amy Dillwyn's historical novel centres on the narrator's involvement at Killay, and the social ferment of the time. Anne Beale was also living in Wales for part, if not all, of the period of the Rebecca Riots and while she attempts to understand the grievances of the people and commends the loyalty of the rioters to their leader (Dearnley,1989), she presents a highly romanticised version of events which focusses on the women and romantic intrigue. In The Rebecca Rioter, women are in the background, mostly in the home.

The main female character is the squire's daughter, Miss Gwenllian Tudor, who is portrayed as a cold 'do-gooder'; the narrator's disdain for those women who conformed (or at least pretended to) to social expectations is clearly demonstrated. This contempt is broadened to include "the Swansea tradespeople" when Evan recounts how the local children used to run close to carriages:

> If there was any lady who wanted to be thought very feeling, she was sure to begin screaming and hiding her face ... and such-like nonsense, till her favourite young man comforted her.
>
> (Dillwyn,1880,i,p.8)

In contrast to Miss Gwenllian, Evan's sister, Martha, is warm-hearted although the narrator does not consider this to be the attribute that a woman needs for survival either.

> Poor Martha ... would have been better off if she had been more cold-blooded and had not been so anxious about Tom - for she vexed after him ... and began to grow pale and thin.
>
> (Dillwyn,1880,i,p.179)

Evan's mother functions solely within the home and act as a repository for old wives tales but, in Chloe Arguelle (1881), the author illustrates her belief in a mother's influence with her description of a gentleman who had lived so much alone with his mother that "he readily saw things from her point of view" (i,p.150). It is often the mother who attempts to arrange suitable marriages, for sons as well as daughters, as in the novels of Anne Beale who refers to a "tale of a worldly mother, who persuaded her daughter to forsake a poor lover for a rich one" (Beale,1869,i,p.145). This apparently refers to the Glamorgan folk-tale Y Ferch o Gefn Ydfa (The Maid of Cefn Ydfa), despite Anne Beale's comment that it is a "worn out tale", she uses variations of it remarkably often as a plot or sub-plot of her own novels. Amy Dillwyn also uses a folk-tale as the basis for one her plots but this is not of Welsh origin. Jill (1887) uses the *Cinderella* theme, and also lays the blame for many daughters' misfortunes on a strong mother.

As neither Anne Beale nor Amy Dillwyn focus significantly on the industrial areas of Wales or on the lives of the peasantry, there is no notable "Mam" image within their novels, although Shanno, from Anne Beale's Country Courtships, is possibly a prototype. She looks after an extended family (four generations) but contributes

to the family income by selling produce at the local market. The family cottage lacks any form of luxury but the home and children are well cared for, in contrast to the homes of the women of the mining towns of Merthyr, Aberdare and Neath. These are described as poor and dirty huts yet the women are portrayed as kind and helpful. There is more authorial concern at the ravages of the landscape and the pollution of the rivers than at the social conditions of these communities.

The theme of mothers' influence is continued in Chloe Arguelle (privately sub-titled "Caricatures of the Humbugs" by Amy Dillwyn), which has a distinctive Dickensian flavour. The author attacks London society and demonstrates her active dislike of the poseurs and hypocrites of the fashionable set. The only Welsh female characters are from the gentry; Lady Elise, who has been well tutored by her mother, knows that "though marriage is her inevitable destiny", a man will only be considered suitable if he has "riches or high rank to bestow upon his wife" (i,p.11). The narrator then challenges the concept that only a woman gains or loses status in relation to her marriage partner. Sir Cadwallader Gough "never came out 'f Wales in his life till th' eldest Arguelle married him: she put him int' Parl'ment" (i,p.25). Although the heroine, Chloe, (whose home is in Wales) marries at the end of the novel, this is portrayed as a marriage of equals who join forces to bring down the humbugs.

Amy Dillwyn also attacked the 'false' New Woman and this again reflects her attitude to appearance and reality. Lady Jane Dorville

> has blunt, straightforward masculine manners, which lead many people to think that she is as open as the day; but in truth she is a

> humbug ... Her assumed manliness is merely put on ... she took to wear her hair short, to smoke, hunt, shoot, swear, bet.
>
> (Dillwyn,1881,i,pp.19-20)

All the attributes which the author accords Lady Jane are ones which the cartoonists of the day used to lampoon the New Woman, but Amy Dillwyn believed that if one actually enjoyed such activities, and they did not cause harm to anyone else, then it was one's right to do as one liked. However, she would probably have concurred with the view that "feminism is not what you wear but what you think" (Treneman,1987,p.33b).

The plot of her third novel, A Burglary (1883), revolves around a robbery and the subsequent false accusations and repercussions, but the main thrust of the work is to reject the concept of marriage as a socially acceptable act. She was becoming increasingly conscious of the rise of women's movements and in this novel she draws attention to the Victorian female stereotype and the suppression of women. A Burglary is set mostly in Wales and the heroine, Imogen Rhys, is a New Woman even though she is only seventeen at the beginning of the novel. She is about to be brought out into society and wonders about the changes this will make to her life:

> In some ways ... she certainly looked with satisfaction at the prospect ... But then again she would feel vague fear lest ... she might find herself deprived of any part of that independence which seemed ... to have become a necessary part of her, and to be almost dearer to her than anything else. She would declare that no chains would ever be to her taste, however richly ornamented and softly padded they might be, and that it was better to be free than to be broken into harness of any kind.
>
> (Dillwyn,1883,i,pp.7-8)

This character's conviction is the central theme of the novel around which the plot is loosely wrapped.

The author highlights and questions the socially expected behaviour of women in times of crisis and, as in the work of Anne Beale, the concept of woman as an invalid. Ethel Carton has been bound and gagged by an intruder, but maintains her composure:

> It was always her ambition to do whatever would be generally considered the right thing ... which was quite remarkable in a person possessing as much originality and strength of character as she did ... yet the idea that to eschew society for a while was ... in the eyes of the world, the correct course to be pursued by a lady who had been robbed, made her pause ... A few seconds of reflection sufficed to bring her natural good sense to the front, and show her the absurdity of affecting to be an invalid when she was really as well as possible. But she would on no account run any risk of being thought wanting in due decorum, so she was careful to give no sign of the surprise and inward amusement she had felt ...
>
> (Dillwyn,1883,i,pp.130-131)

Again, this reflects the view, which the author expressed in her diaries, that change can be brought about without a great deal of upheaval if an individual has the courage to live according to their personal beliefs. The key point which she emphasises is that women have *a choice*. They can accept all that society dictates and act accordingly, or make up their own minds and attempt to change the status quo. As Imogen declares, "All I want is ... to be of some real use in the world" (i,p.67), but she believes that to achieve this, marriage might have to be sacrificed and she rejects a proposal of marriage despite the conventions of society (as Amy Dillwyn understood only too well). Imogen also needed "constant employment ... either work or play, to absorb her restless and superabundant energy" (p.195), which probably mirrors the feelings of Amy Dillwyn and many other women during this period.

The author also uses this novel to illustrate men's attitude towards, and perceptions of, a woman's role. Imogen's brother, Ralph, reflects contemporary thought on women's position in society:

> "A man's got to do something, of course ... But a woman can't have any profession except to marry, and it's absurd of her to go taking up some particular line when she doesn't know what her husband'll be like, or what sort of position she'll have to fill."
>
> (Dillwyn,1883,i,pp.62-63)

However, Imogen reflects the author's viewpoint:

> The popular idea that it was the natural destiny of all women to get married if possible, seemed to her to be an insult to her sex ... her ideal of the proper mutual relations between the male and female sex [was] - a relationship to be characterised by absolute equality and independence.
>
> (Dillwyn,1883,i,pp.63-64)

Amy Dillwyn develops her opinions on equality in the two novels Jill and Jill & Jack (1887); in these novels she expresses her social radicalism and deals with the question of female emancipation. Jill, as narrator, introduces herself, but her words could also be read as 'Amy Dillwyn introduces herself':

> I have heard people say that men are more apt to be of an adventurous disposition than women; but that is an opinion from which I differ ... It is my belief that the aforesaid spirit is distributed by nature impartially throughout the human race ... Once let it have fair play, untrammelled by nervous, hesitating, shrinking, home-clinging tendencies, and it will infallibly lead its possessor to some bold departure from the everyday routine of existence that satisfies mortals of a more hum-drum temperament.
>
> (Dillwyn,1887,p.1)

The well-born heroine Jill, who refers to England (where the novels are set) as "that abode of snobs", reflects that the novels she read as a young girl were "exaggeratedly sentimental and goody" but they taught her "the behaviour to be expected from any

girl-heroine" (p.9). Jill chooses to ignore this "guidance for girls" (Rowbotham,1989) and finds employment as a lady's maid. She is involved in a variety of situations including deceit, fraud and sexual harassment, but despite the humour, the author makes it very clear that the modern woman is not prepared to tolerate male exploitation or abuse at any level.

Jill does not end in marriage, but in the sequel the heroine (who has regained her inheritance and has become the lady squire) is considered as a "matrimonial prize" (i,p.1) by Jack's mother. Jack believes that he wants someone to act as "lady of the house", to "save him from domestic bothers" (a Perfect Lady), yet he does not want "to become the owner" of a wife. When Jill's colourful past is revealed, his mother remarks that "this entirely alters her matrimonial eligibility" (ii,p.116), but Jack rejects his mother's advice and welcomes a union with this New Woman.

Amy Dillwyn's novels were intended to attack the stereotypes and role models of Victorian society; she allowed her heroines the freedom to act out their full potential. Although they are not primarily of a Welsh focus, her works deal with issues which affected the lives of all women. She sets up the Victorian female stereotype simply to knock it down again, and it is the heroine who brings about the downfall. In Anne Beale's novels, the influence of women is strong though usually confined to the home, but some of the female characters begin to voice their dissatisfaction at the social expectations of women and at an inequality of opportunities between the sexes. She employs the device of doubling of characters but there is a shift of focus from the absolutes of angel and harlot. While it is possible to identify stereotyped

characteristics, the author expresses a belief in the individual and offers a degree of psychological insight into a number of her characters.

Amy Dillwyn's female characters appear closer to George Eliot's than Anne Beale's; both Amy Dillwyn and George Eliot express concern at "girlish miseducation". George Eliot also attacked the image of the Perfect Lady, describing her as a "doll-Madonna in her shrine" (McGuinn,1978,p.201). Her technique with, for example, the contrasting of Dorothea Brooke and Rosamund Vincy in Middlemarch (1872) was for one character to adopt the conventional female role and for the other to challenge it, but the question of who has the greatest sense of 'self', and happiness, is left unresolved. For Amy Dillwyn's characters the answer is clear: it the woman who makes up her own mind, who seeks out opportunities and is not afraid to speak out against injustice. The author also makes it clear that this behaviour or attitude should not incur penalties.

When she had to take charge of her own life, she had the courage and intelligence to live up to these ideals. She would probably have been aware of Lady Charlotte Guest's and Rose Crawshay's involvement with industrial and social works (John,1991), but it could also be argued that she had, to some extent, created her own role-models. Had her period of 'decline' afforded her a personal space in which she attempted to create, albeit (initially) within her fiction, conditions which allowed women to recognise the need to stand up for the ideal "world in which women are not subordinated" (Aaron & Walby,1991)?

CHAPTER THREE

3. OUT OF THE UPHOLSTERED CAGE

1890 - 1919

From the 1890s onwards, women's involvement with the Temperance Movement increased in Wales and it was from this time that they began to organise groups which were separate from the men. The origins, development and rise of this movement, its subsequent spread to south Wales and its links with the suffrage movement, are documented by Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan (1991), who argues that there was a strong link between class, religion and language within the temperance movements in Wales, as the majority of women who were active within these societies were "middle class and chapel-going" (p.139), although this was not quite so prominent in the south. However, it was their aim to include women from all sections of the community, and their underlying concern was with "social purity, for sexual morality and abstinence from alcohol were seen as walking hand-in-hand" (Lloyd-Morgan,1991,p.141).

Temperance literature promoted the image of mothers as guardians of the country's morals and, while the Welsh language magazines of 1875-1900 encouraged women to "work actively in society" (Williams,1991,p.87), the overall image of the true Welshwoman which these periodicals promoted remained the same. Motherhood was exalted and the concept of separate spheres was revitalised, again underpinned by Nonconformist principles. This confined females to home and chapel activities yet there were many women who endorsed this role model (Williams,1991). By 1913 both *Y Gymraes* and *Y Frythones* were shifting the image slightly to embrace the

concept that there might be more opportunities for women than previously anticipated (Lloyd-Morgan,1991).

An increase in female literacy probably added to the success of the Temperance movement, and opportunities for public speaking allowed women to become involved with more activities outside the home. However, these movements did not progress unchallenged, and some of the severest criticisms came from within the chapels themselves, where many elders still believed that a woman's place was in the home and were against women speaking in public. This could only have increased women's awareness of the inequality between the sexes, and it is probable that this led, for some of them, to a more conscious attempt to escape from what Josephine Knowles described as an "upholstered cage" (Dyhouse,1987), and opened their eyes to the prospects of an involvement with politics.

Women's struggle for political representation at local and national level began in the 1860s and by the 1870s the Trade Union Movement was attracting the interest of working class women. The Co-operative Women's Guild canvassed for better living conditions for the working class and became committed to feminist principles. It also supported the fight for enfranchisement (Beddoe,1987). In Wales, Elizabeth Andrews, a miner's wife, helped to form the Rhondda Co-operative Women's Guild in 1910, and pressed for the improvement of conditions for the women of the community. From 1919 to 1948 she acted as organiser for the Labour Movement in Wales (Andrews,1956; Jones,1991; Cook & Evans,1991). She was also active in the suffrage movement and facilitated the involvement of working class women

with the campaign. The outbreak of the First World War served to unite many of the different suffrage groups and directed their energies into war work. However, the pressure for female emancipation continued, and in Cardiff there were campaigns for the election of women into local government.

While *The Western Mail* tended to follow the lead of the English- language presses in Wales during the 1880s, in their promotion of images based on Victorian ideals, they did report a meeting held in Cardiff in 1881 supporting the suffrage campaign (Cook & Evans,1991). However, it was not until 1907 that an organised suffrage movement was established in Llandudno, followed by the Cardiff and District Women's Suffrage Society in 1908, which became the largest society outside London during the years 1912-13 (Cook & Evans,1991). Although many of the general aims of the suffrage movement were gaining support, the new women of Wales were being advised to remember that "Welsh women are the best of women. Let them lead in the uplifting of their husbands and children" (Stephens,1907,p.xx).

S.M. Saunders believed that the previous century had witnessed "the steady advancement of women" and that

> The quiet drawing-room heroine of Jane Austin's novels, who dutifully echoed all her father's or her husband's sentiments has become repugnant to up-to-date women. We assert proudly that now we form our own opinions ... and we claim the right ... to decide in all relations of life what course to pursue.
>
> (Saunders,1907,p.148)

She maintained that advancement carries responsibility and she challenged the influence of popular novels:

> I know full well that there are reading, thinking women, but they are in the minority ... Is it not time for the young women of Wales to awake to their responsibility? ... Wales is waiting ... for a band of women who have prepared their intellects to think and to discriminate, women who ... seek to test their conclusions by cold, hard reasoning.
> (Saunders,1907,pp.148-149)

Yet she suggests that, to train themselves, Welsh women should read and analyse "some of the standard works of English Literature".

W.G. Evans (1990) argues that it was the demands for access to better and higher educational opportunities for women which underpinned the movement towards total female emancipation; he analyzes the changing face of education for girls and women in Wales in great detail. Opportunities for women within the three university colleges in Wales had been limited but, during the 1880s, a greater number of women had been admitted and they began to demand representation on governing boards. Before the establishment of the Swansea Teacher Training College in 1872, Welsh women had to train for elementary school teaching in England, where they were taught to "promote amongst working-class girls a domestic ideology and sex-role stereotyping" (Evans,1990,p.8), and initially the Swansea college continued to promote these ideals. By the 1890s the numbers of women at teacher training colleges had increased and there was a growing awareness of the dangers of gender stereotyping.

The demand for increased secondary education for girls in Wales during the 1870s and 1880s was coupled with a challenge to conventionally held views on female cognitive abilities (Lewis,1987; Rubinstein,1986); by 1890 attempts were being made

to introduce a broader academic education for girls. However, between 1890 and 1910, there was still pressure from the Board of Education to pay greater attention to domestic subjects, especially in the education of working-class girls. While an increase in free places in secondary education after 1907 offered a greater opportunity to all children, "until well into the twentieth century ... schooling was regarded as less important for the girl than for the boy" (Evans,1990,p.258). The sacrifices which many working-class families (and especially the women) made to educate their children (usually the eldest male) was emphasised in many fictional works and reinforces the image of Welsh women as self-sacrificing, doting mothers.

Between 1871 and 1901 half the total number of women working in Wales were in domestic employment but by 1911, while the numbers of women working in agriculture had declined, there was a marked increase in female employment in the hotel and catering industry, and in the professional occupations of teaching and nursing (Williams & Jones,1982). In the Rhondda, female involvement with the mining industry was minimal (John,1980), yet by 1911, 1 in 3 of all employed males was a miner or quarryman. The Rhondda Valleys were dependent on coal production and, as this was a male-dominated area of employment, the delineation of male and female work was distinct. Women were at home, yet their cage was rarely upholstered. Their lives were hard, filled with domestic labour, which revolved around the needs of their menfolk, and with childbearing. A woman's role was "to support and buttress ... from every side" (Jones, 1991,p.115), yet the social conditions of the area, poor housing, sanitation, health care and high infant mortality rate, made this a difficult task. The reality of the unremitting toil which many

women endured was rarely portrayed in the fiction of the period, although some novelists (whose work will be considered in this chapter) did attempt to address a number of the problems which women faced.

The influx of workers into the area when the mines opened had included many who were Welsh speaking Nonconformists; this could offer one explanation for the development of an obsession with household cleanliness, as "The Nonconformist code was strict and its implications for household labour were straightforward. 'Cleanliness is next to Godliness'" (Jones,1991,p.124). Hywel Francis and David Smith (1980) argue that "the coal-dirt could be kept at bay by an army of women trained to wash and scrub and polish as men trooped in and out on alternative shifts" (p.3). It could also be argued that these women were attempting to exercise control over the sphere to which they were confined and that the battle was against the dirt and grime generated by the industry which provided the wages (John,1984). However, the price that women paid for this life of continuous exertion and childbearing was very often early death, as indicated by the recorded mortality rates in the district between 1881 and 1910 (Gittings,1982;Jones,1991).

Bert Coombes' autobiography (1939) clearly focuses on the life of the miners but, when he directs his attention towards women, he paints a graphic picture of their domestic world. On his arrival at his lodgings in 1912, he notices that "the brass rod at the bottom (of the door) shone and the step was milk white" (p.20) and he acknowledges that "The women work very hard - too hard - trying to cheat the greyness that is outside by a clean and cheerful show within" (p.25). His

recollection of his wedding ceremony in 1913 illustrates the continued reinforcement by religion of the community's gender roles. The Minister advises:

> You, bachgen, will go to work hard and bring all your money home to your wife ... and you, merchi, will try to make the house nice for your husband when he comes home and will try to do the best possible with his pay and give him just a little bit back for pocket money. Then everything will come all right.
>
> (Coombes,1939,p.63)

Whether women were trying to live up to the ideals of Chapel and/or society, to be the perfect "Mam", or trying to gain control of their environment, the price they paid was high. For some, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the opportunity to become involved with activities outside the home was an attractive one.

Despite the demands of the new women, there were many who sought to conserve the domestic ideology and most nineteenth century feminists maintained that women had to make a choice between work and marriage (but clearly supported the right of all woman to work outside the home)(Lewis,1987). Some women novelists attempted to deal with the issue of women's emancipation, and realistically portrayed the problems facing women in a time when, for many, marriage was not *the answer*, although the novels were generally romantic (Rubinstein,1986; Beaumont,1899). However, there were a number of women writers who dealt with more contentious issues such as venereal disease and women's sexual drive (possibly as a reaction to the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts in 1886). These works were viewed as all the more shocking because they were written by women, but in general their main concern was to portray the struggle of educated women in a male dominated world, and to attempt to understand female sexuality.

In her examination of these novels, Lucy Bland (1987) contends that the new woman novelists were mostly New Women themselves and that the novel was one vehicle which women used as "a voice ... with which to confront men on all issues". They had

> as their subject matter the doubts and dilemmas surrounding the 'new woman' ... Some [writers] looked to the possibilities of happier alternatives ... [but] it was ... harsh social realism which typified most of the 'new woman' fiction.
>
> (Bland,1987,pp.133-134)

From this definition, therefore, Amy Dillwyn would not be considered a 'new woman' writer, although, as discussed in Chapter Two, she did attempt to address "doubts and dilemmas". However, in her personal life she could not be considered anything other than a New Woman.

When her brother died in 1890, followed by her father in 1892, she was forced to move out of her home as the estate was entailed on the male line. Her father had left her the Zinc Spelter Works, but there were massive debts amounting to £100,000. At forty seven years of age she left her "upholstered cage" and spent the next thirteen years restoring the Spelter Works. By shrewd business acumen and thrift, she paid off her father's creditors and after ten years the business had become a profitable concern. Unfortunately this did not dispel the preconception, expressed in many of the novels considered below, that women had no business sense.

Amy Dillwyn was well aware of the prejudice against women in public life, and she was a great supporter of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies but did not agree with the violent methods of the Pankhursts. She supported the female

employees of Ben Evans's (a Swansea Emporium) when they went on strike over wages in 1901, and her demands for a boycott of the store led to an invitation for her to assist with the organisation of the newly-formed branch of the National Federation of Women Workers (Painting,1987). Although this direct action was in relation to pay, women had been "pursuing policies of price fixing" in Wales since the 1830s (John,1984,p.75).

Whereas Amy Dillwyn's novels focus on the position of women in society and the difficulties which they faced (and often overcame) in attempting to enter the public sphere, Allen Raine (Anne Adaliza Beynon Puddicombe, 1836-1908) focuses specifically on Wales and Welsh community life. Her novels are set, at least partly, in the small coastal villages in West Wales and, in general, the main characters are the ordinary people of the villages. While some of the novels demonstrate the author's awareness of the social restraints imposed on women, her work has often been criticised for its romanticism (Mathias,1987).

Allen Raine was born at Newcastle Emlyn, Cardiganshire, but from thirteen years of age she and her younger sister, Lettie, were educated in England. In 1856 she returned to Wales, but there was little opportunity to use the education she had gained, and the family's financial and social situation relegated the girls to a domestic world. In 1872 Ada (Allen Raine's family name) married and spent the first ten years of her married life in London. She was almost constantly ill and, as with Amy Dillwyn's illness, there seems to have been a psychological rather than physical cause, as Ada found it difficult to adapt to life in Victorian London. Sally

Jones (1979) argues that the author expressed her distaste at the regulated lives which women led at this time in Neither Storehouse Nor Barn (1908), through the character of Olwen Meyric, orphaned daughter of a Welsh country vicar who is sent to live with her aunt in Manchester.

> "Poor things," she thought, "how dull their lives must be! Always the same wherever we go - the same talk, the same dresses; and if you look at the clock before you enter their houses, you can always tell what they will be doing ... then in the evening, when we ought to be tired with the fresh air, walking or working, comes dinner and dressing up like a doll."
>
> (Raine,1908,p.12)

This view is similar to that of the novelist and feminist Mona Caird, who published The Morality of Marriage in 1897. She believed that many women were trapped into unsuitable marriages because of financial or social pressures, and became victims, "making useless sacrifices" and exchanging "one set of restrictions for another" (Rubinstein, 1986,p.38). Her argument reflects the sentiments expressed in Amy Dillwyn's novels that it was unjust that women should feel constrained to marry for the sake of financial stability or for social acceptability. This is also a theme which is evident in the works of authors from later generations.

While it would be unprofitable to look for the overt feminist stance of Amy Dillwyn in the works of Allen Raine, it can be argued that the author attempted to draw her reading public's attention to a number of social issues. For example, the position of women in a patriarchal society and the restrictions imposed upon them by religious codes, notions of femininity, the effects of anglicization on Wales, and the education and employment of girls and women. However, the genre of the romance,

obviously imposed restrictions upon her, and possibly limited the extent to which she was able to develop her thoughts on these issues.

Allen Raine's heroines vary from book to book, although it is often the double or villainess, who is the most convincing character. In Torn Sails (1898), Gwladys has a "simple, guileless nature" (p.18), faints easily, but is "so passive that she arouses irritation rather than admiration in the reader" (Jones,1979,p.29). From a male point-of-view, however, she is the ideal woman; her husband sees her as "the peerless pearl of all the maidens" and believed that his duty was to "guard her path from every danger" (p.152). Gwen's characterization as the rejected sweetheart develops in intensity as the novel and her madness progress. Her "shrewdness and quickness of repartee had made her a favourite with the lads of the village" (p.28), and she is considered by the older men "a tidy girl, and saving, and steady" (p.61), yet it is the conventional heroine who attains lasting happiness. Torn Sails is a story of star-crossed lovers, broken promises, of a lack of communication, and of adherence to the social code no matter what the personal cost. However, in the tradition of a true romance, the ending is happy, although there are many dramas in between; the lovers (as is usually the case in Shakespeare's plays) are eventually matched with the right partners, even if death is necessary to unite them.

The heroines of Torn Sails and Where Billows Roll (1909), are cast in the same mould, although the characterisation and situation of Nesta Morgan highlights the effects of the precepts of the domestic ideology on women's lives and expectations. Where Billows Roll is also a rather melodramatic love story with a happy ending.

The heroine, Nesta, is eventually allowed to marry the man of her choosing, although there are the usual family demands, quarrels, and deaths before this occurs. The delineation of the subsidiary characters is less stereotyped than that of the central characters except that the author, like Anne Beale, dresses a number of the women in a Welsh National costume.

Nesta is sensitive, pure and generous, and although she is " a flighty child sometimes" her grandmother assumes that when she is married to William (if Mrs Morgan can arrange it) she will settle down. When she eventually resigns herself to marry him after a series of misunderstandings, in the tradition of romantic fiction, he tells her that his home "is all yours now". She has control over his domestic world, but the view of woman as man's property is reinforced when William "was thoroughly upset by the loss of his horse ... his mind was far more absorbed by his loss than by the possession of Nesta" (p.219). As mentioned above, it is feasible that Allen Raine's delineation of these stereotyped heroines was shaped by the genre, and publishers had extensive control over subject matter, location and characterisation.

However, some of the other female characters are often far less passive than the heroines and although their fate is often to suffer hardship, insanity, or even death, they are portrayed in greater depth. The characterization of Elizabeth Powys in A Welsh Singer (1897), counterbalances the heroine's, and acts as a catalyst to develop the action. Elizabeth is a child with "golden hair ... her blue eyes and dimpled face were generally wreathed in smiles" (p.10), but through her futile infatuation with

Ieuan (the hero) and hatred of Mifanwy, the amiable and innocent heroine, she becomes a woman with a lack of sensibility. She is incapable of loving and, as such, incapable of feeling remorse. The stereotypical physical description of a fair maiden contrasts with her psychological make-up and is in complete contrast to Mifanwy, suggesting that the author shared Amy Dillwyn's preoccupation with appearance and reality.

This type of character delineation was further developed by Caradoc Evans. In his short story *The Glory that was Sion's*, Twm Tybach marries Madlen to possess her livestock. On hearing that has only a short time to live, Madlen begins to prepare for his death. This apparent insensitivity also occurs in a later short story from Glyn Jones. Cadi Hughes refuses her dying husband some of the ham which she is cooking as it's "boiling for the funeral" (Jones,1979,p.136). John Harris (1993) contends that Caradoc Evans portrays his women characters as social victims who often go insane. In the later stories they are "as individuals; more potently alive, pragmatic and intuitive, they occupy every dimension, the sexual in particular" yet this libidinous behaviour often results in "suffering and death" (Gramich,1994,p.77). As noted above, this is a recurrent motif in Allen Raine's novels, although not so forcefully expressed.

On The Wings Of The Wind (1903), repeats a motif used in Torn Sails; one which is used again in Queen of the Rushes, which allows the author to confront some of the charges of the 1847 *Report*. In her youth Matti Lloyd had been "wild and wicked and more than ready for any folly" (p.26). Matti Lloyd, Mari Vone and

Nance Ellis are all portrayed as headstrong; all are seduced by sailors which leads to their spiritual as well as social downfall. While this appears to substantiate the charge that Welsh women were as wild as the countryside, it also acknowledges female sexuality and challenges the image of women as passive victims of male lust.

Matti Lloyd had been courting Doctor Dan at the time of her elopement and he recalls how she "had returned his affection with a fervour that promised to guild the old rooms of Hendyrafon with the sunshine of domestic happiness" (p.6). However, this image of Welsh women's openness to passion was not confined to novels. Bert Coombes recalls how an old woman from his Herefordshire home contrasted Welsh and Herefordshire girls. Welsh girls "do say as thay canna live a'thouht 'em", whereas Herefordshire girls "do say as thay dunna want thay chaps when thay do" (Coombes,1939,p.51). She believed that this was why her sons had married Welsh girls.

Allen Raine's acknowledgement of female passion, challenges to the *status quo*, and independence of spirit on her female characters, combine in one of her most successful novels, Queen Of The Rushes (1906), which was based on the Welsh religious revivals of 1904. However, there is also a deeper psychological profile of the 'doubled' female character in this novel. The hero and heroine are, once again, orphaned, but Gildas Rees takes over Scethryg Farm and takes care of Gwenifer Owen who had been struck dumb when she saw her mother drown. She loves Gildas but, in the tradition of Allen Raine's novels, he marries Nance Ellis. Another complication is introduced in the form of Captain Jack, who wants to marry

Gwenifer. Nance becomes infatuated with Captain Jack but, nevertheless, marries Gildas as he offers her greater social status and material wealth. After a quarrel with Gildas she attempts to run away to join the Captain, and she disappears.

Nance is volatile, scheming and has a "fickle heart torn with restless longings" (p.72). Gwenifer, who is more reliable than Nance, goes to chapel regularly and is moved by the preaching but is not so affected as Nance. She is presented, from a male point-of-view, as a stereotyped maiden, "surrounded by the snowy milk-pans, and white scoured dairy utensils, she seemed to him the embodiment of purity and innocence" (p.114). However, the characterisation of these two women also develops the theme of Nature as a shaping force in human development, which will be discussed later in this chapter together with the theme of women speaking out, of finding (or recovering) a voice, which is prominent in this novel.

Many women who desired changes were "afraid of being called Suffragettes" (Andrews,1956,p.17); in north Wales in 1904 one mother who was a "bit of a suffragette" (Hughes,1989,p.4) received Pankhurst pamphlets in sealed envelopes from the butcher's wife. The concept of womanly behaviour underpins much of the writing around the turn of the twentieth century and there was considerable inportance attached to the image that was created. However, Rubinstein (1986) argues that the images of woman were simply modified to encompass the social changes of the time.

IMAGES OF WELSH WOMEN AS PORTRAYED BY ANGLO-WELSH WOMEN NOVELISTS 1850-1985

Angela Fish M.Phil. 1995

Joseph Keating's (1871-1934) novels reinforce the patriarchal code and emphasise the importance of marriage, family life, and the responsibility of women to be perfect wives. Yet there is little depth to his female characterisation. Maurice: A Romance of Light and Darkness (1905), is set in the Glamorgan mining valleys in the late nineteenth century, but the ending is reminiscent of Romeo and Juliet. The women of the village gossip and they are portrayed as the troublemakers who bring about the lovers' separation. Delia, heroine of The Marriage Contract (1914), is an unfaithful wife who risks losing her child as a "false wife cannot be a true mother" (p.141).

Allen Raine develops her concern with society's attitudes towards correct female behaviour in Queen Of The Rushes, through the two central male characters, Gildas and Captain Jack. Captain Jack is the outsider and initially exemplifies the double standard.

> To Captain Jack the little episode of a flirtation with Nance meant no more than had a score of other such experiences; why, she was all but a married woman, and therefore safe to joke and flirt with!
>
> (Raine,1906,p.71)

Gildas, however, is portrayed as an intensely reserved man who cannot articulate his feelings. He embodies the twin powers of patriarchy and religion in his attitude to women: they should occupy (and even possibly dominate) the private, but not the public, arena.

> "D'ye think ... 'tis pleasing to God that a woman should leave her house empty, and her husband lonely, for any prayer meeting in the world? 'Tis a small job getting her husband's supper, I know, but if it's the job she ought to be doing, that is how she will be serving God best at that moment."
>
> (Raine,1906,p.123)

He is shocked at the lack of control of the revivalists and at Nance's behaviour when she prays publicly for his conversion.

> He was startled by a familiar voice that ... burst into a fervent petition for mercy. It was Nance's voice! and Gildas, astonished and angry, stood still to listen, scarcely believing his own ears. Nance to raise her voice alone in an assembled multitude! ... It was intolerable to the proud man.
>
> (Raine,1906,p.129)

His attitude echoes the 1890s view of Mary, Lady Jeune, a Conservative, who was not totally unsympathetic to the feminist cause. She was, however, "adamant that political and social activity came second to the responsibilities of the wife and mother" (Rubinstein,1986,p.7). This conflict, between the ideals of feminism and the tenaciousness of the domestic ideology, was one that was to persist for many years. However, C.K. Evans's argument, in her overtly religious article, *To My Sisters*, differs slightly. She cites the teachings of St.Paul and contends that "Anna, the Prophetess spake in the temple ... none silencing her or making her afraid" (p.151). She maintains that women were well aware of the importance of the era and of the "glorious possibilities" of the "present and the future". She identifies herself as one of the "older ones" (as Allen Raine appears to have done), who "must step aside and let our daughters do and dare", and she issues a challenge to the *status quo*:

> The old cry that a woman's sphere is confined to the "heinming sphere" has sobbed itself out, and now both hemispheres are her acknowledged realms for service.
>
> (Evans,1907,p.150)

Nevertheless, she maintains that home-life should not be undervalued, and although she fully acknowledges the opportunities for single women and argues that "marriage

is no longer a situation to be bought - but a comradeship to be shared" (p.152), she still charges "the mothers of Wales" with responsibility for the moral education of their children.

The pioneer feminist [Alis] Mallt Williams (Alice Matilda Langland Williams) also defined the responsibilities of Welsh women in her article *Welsh Women's Mission in the Twentieth Century* (1907), which reflects the patriotism exhibited in her romantic novel A Maid of Cymru (1901). However, she maintains that it is the responsibility for the future of the language which lay on the "mothers and daughters of the land"; that the destructive forces of anglicization are responsible for the erosion of "pronounced national characteristics" (Williams,1907,p.143).

Allen Raine also focuses on the process of anglicization, in relation to inequality and social structure, in A Welsh Witch. Yshbel Lloyd is told by her colliery-owning uncle to "drop the Welsh" if she wants to progress in society. Again, in A Welsh Singer, Mifanwy is told "'you still have a slight Welsh accent, and we want to get rid of that before you begin to sing in public'" (p.141). Nesta Morgan, the heroine of Where Billows Roll, "was always shy and rather silent with strangers ... she answered Hugh's questions ... in perfectly good English" (p.36) and she speaks with only the faintest Welsh accent. When the peasant Bet is chastised (in Welsh) by the vicar for not attending church, "thinking the occasion was worthy of the effort, she poured forth her little story of domestic tragedy in English, although the conversation had hitherto been in Welsh" (p.41). Yet this does not appear to be a straightforward projection of the view that advancement for the Welsh came solely by the adoption

of the English language (and by implication its culture) as "contempt for the Welsh Language is usually associated with a character who is villainous or undesirable" (Jones,1979,p.19).

Yshbel Lloyd, the heroine of A Welsh Witch (1902), is used as a vehicle for the exposure of the dangers of pretension and snobbery. The novel is full of a twists, turns and disasters, misunderstandings, and more star-crossed lovers and gypsies. However, it moves outside the rural areas of Wales and includes informed passages on the mining areas of Glamorgan. Despite Yshbel's social aspirations, and the attempts of her aunt to anglicize her, she does not become "so enamoured of her life, that her old love ... [became] distasteful to her" (p.247). Her aunt, Mrs Jones,

> walked up and down the room, which was furnished with every luxury that money and bad taste could collect. Her black eyes and her mouth had lost their natural kindly expression in their continual endeavour to look dignified and indifferent to her grand surroundings.
> (Raine,1902,p.221)

It would be impractical to attempt to deal with Allen Raine's attitude to the Welsh language within the scope of this thesis, but whether she was attempting to appraise the effects of anglicization on Wales, trying to find a suitable voice for Welsh writing in English, or simply exploiting the outside market's perception of the quaintness and romanticism of Wales, are all questions worthy of further consideration (Aaron,1994a; Conran,1982; Jones, 1979; Evans,1907).

Allen Raine's perception of the role of the younger generation (as noted above), and the importance of their changing attitudes, was extended through the narrator of Where Billows Roll who comments on an apparent lack of interest in Sunday church

services within the community. This is attributed to the dissenting chapels' enticement of the younger generation "when they grew old enough to insist upon having their way" (p.34). The author's attack on religious hypocrisy is often veiled with bitter humour. After the vicar, Mr Gwythern, has delivered a homily on sabbatarianism, he is asked if and when he will bury the son of the Bullets (who never go to Church). ""Let me see. To-morrow is the meet at Hendy. Wednesday is the fair at Carmadoc, and I must go there to buy a horse. Oh! I daresay I can manage it on the same day"" (Raine,1909,p.43).

A passage from Torn Sails (1898) also exemplifies the sharp, dry humour of the author, and stands out as a possible indictment of Welsh peasant women's morals, of their total acceptance of class rules and the role of women. Conversely, the author might be highlighting men's lack of responsibility, and religious hypocrisy. The reader learns that Gwen's child has been

> "born in lawful wedlock! ... Not like thee, mother, nor granny, not yet her mother!"
> "No, indeed, it is true!" said Lallo ... "bad luck has followed us for generations. But thy father was a respectable man, Gwen; he is deacon in his chapel at Abersethin, and his wife and family are the best dressed in Salem Chapel."
>
> (Raine,1898,p.187)

However, marriage propels Nance Ellis (Queen of the Rushes) into extremes of behaviour and she "developed into a famous housekeeper, and had taken up her duties as mistress with a zest ... for ever on the alert, she dusted, and swept, and cleaned" (Raine,1906,p.78) and this extreme behaviour at home is mirrored in chapel, when she is caught up with the Revival. "Nance stepped lightly over the

stubble ... her cheeks and eyes aflame with the fire of religious excitement which was consuming her" (p.181).

Likewise, in the Glamorgan colliery village of A Welsh Witch, "the cleanly housewife renews the whitewash on any stain the previous day may have brought her spotless hearth or fire" (p.249). These images of industrious Welsh housewives certainly counterbalance those of the *Report* of 1847, yet they also serve to highlight the constant drudgery and repetitiveness of women's lives, and the means by which they were kept firmly in the private sphere. However, this depiction of Welsh women's obsession with cleanliness was not confined to fiction. In a (supposedly) factual account Thomas Johns depicted a rural Welsh homestead which he claimed:

> fairly describes the best homes in Wales today ... This home is characterised by order and cleanliness. They believe in the old adage "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" ... Mothers and daughters rise early so as to get the work of the day well in hand. The furniture is dustless and spotless ... everything shines.
>
> (Johns,1907,p.182)

Allen Raine's interest in the restraints which religion placed on individuals is evident in Queen Of The Rushes, whose origins in the Newcastle Emlyn area had given Allen Raine the perfect opportunity to study the event, and this is probably the only one of her novels whose setting can be located with historical accuracy. It is the Revival and its effect on the whole community which is the catalyst for the action in this novel and not, as is generally the case, the romantic interaction of the main characters. The Revival uncovers personality traits and induces emotions which are often too powerful to be restrained, and the author appears to suggest that there is

a greater danger of insanity from these religious meetings than the promiscuity reported in the 1847 Blue Books.

Queen Of The Rushes also develops the concept of Nature as a greater shaping force than society in human development. Gwenifer observes and absorbs Nature. She is the "simple, graceful child of the hills" (p.62), who "read the face of Nature ... like an open book" (p.46); Nature sustains her and gives her the mental stability which Nance lacks. Nance, as Gwenifer's double, defies Nature:

> The wind ... hurl[ed] itself against the door with a roar that ... set Nance laughing defiantly. She shook her fist ... and ... ended up with a snap of her fingers.
> "I don't care that for his blustering."
>
> (Raine,1906,p.32)

But Nature eventually destroys her.

This concept had already been introduced in A Welsh Singer, in which Mifanwy, the "Queen of Song" (p.79), is "one of Nature's gentlewomen, with a mind refined beyond that of the usual present-day young lady; though not highly educated, she is well informed" (p.163). Although there are references to female education in Allen Raine's novels, she does not develop them into a clear statement or argument, unlike Mallt Williams (1907) who demanded reforms in education at all levels. However, it is possible that Allen Raine's lack of engagement with such social issues resulted from the restrictions of the genre. It might also reflect a reticence on the author's part to intersperse her fiction with rhetoric, or an inability to manipulate the genre to accommodate her own observations and ideas.

Even though many of the novels are set in an earlier period, there is no substantial reflection of the debates on suitable education for females, or of the inequalities which persisted and of which the author would have been aware from personal experience. There are a number of overt references made to the education of girls, although it is difficult to determine the author's attitude to this issue. In A Welsh Singer, Mifanwy's singing tutor discovers that she is unable to read or write. Although Gwenifer, of Queen of the Rushes, is trained as a diary maid, there is no indication that this training is of the formal kind described by Thomas Johns. His report of a north Wales farming family noted that:

> The eldest son has studied agriculture at the University College, Aberystwyth, while two of the daughters, having obtained certificates of competency in dairy and household management, turn out the farm produce according to the latest ... methods.
>
> (Johns,1907,p.182)

Olwen Meyric's "desultory and irregular" education, had been received

> entirely from her father, and being of an intelligent and inquiring turn of mind she had acquired a good sound stock of general knowledge, together with a refinement of feeling and manners which she might have lost with a wider knowledge of the world and its ways ... Perhaps her education was not one likely to help her to fortune or fame.
>
> (Raine,1908,pp.3-4)

It appears that the author is, on the one hand, supporting the belief that a more structured form of education (which would expose girls to "the wider world", defeminized women by diminishing their essential 'feminine' qualities. On the other hand, she acknowledges that a lack of formal education restricts women's ability to provide for themselves, if the need arises. Inequalities between the sexes is a concern which Allen Raine shared with Amy Dillwyn, and at the beginning of A Welsh Singer Allen Raine emphasises the difference in pay between males and

females who were doing the same work. Mr Powys chastises Ieuan and Mifanwy for leaving the sheep unattended: "Do I pay you threepence a day to wander about ... and you, you hussy, ... Don't I pay you twopence a day to watch my sheep?" (p.9).

Mifanwy has been employed as a shepherdess for a number of years and most of Allen Raine's female characters are involved with work on the land, in the house, or in some way with the local fishing or shipping trade. In Torn Sails, the author again directs attention to female employment and the social (and financial) constraints on women. The majority of the village women who are employed are in domestic service (the predominant area of female employment in Wales, as previously discussed) although some, including Gwen and Gwladys, work in the local sail-sheds. When Gwladys marries the Master, she attains a higher social status and moves into the domestic sphere whereas Gwen continues to work after she is married.

Allen Raine's narrative skill made her one of the most popular authors of her day and by 1908 sales of the eight books published before her death totalled just under two million in the United Kingdom and the colonies. The commercial rewards from such popular fiction must have been attractive, but this may not have been the single reason for Allen Raine's choice of genre; she might simply have preferred to tell 'a good story'. Initially, publishers were reluctant to accept her first novel, A Welsh Singer (1897)[1], possibly because of a prejudice against its Welsh setting (a prejudice

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1 By 1908, this novel had sold 316,000 copies. Sales figures extracted from Hutchinson & Company's promotional material in Queen of the Rushes

which seems to have endured amongst the London publishing houses, as will be discussed in Chapter Five). However, once her outstanding popularity was evident, Allen Raine was allowed to write about Wales as often as she liked. It is feasible that her success facilitated the publication of novels from other women writers who focused on Wales, such as Edith Nepean, whose work will be discussed later in this chapter.

Unfortunately, Allen Raine's sharp, social observations of rural society are often overshadowed by the excessively romantic language and forced events which were necessary to satisfy the principles of the romantic novel's ending. However, it is possible to discern an underpinning of embryonic feminist principles in her work, and On the Wings of the Wind (1903) shifts the focus away from the plot and the traditional happy ending. The author concentrates on the interrelationship of the characters and on their psychological make-up. Whereas death in earlier novels has been a unifying force which overcomes earthly barriers, in this work Silvan Vaughan's death and burial next to Matti and Gwen Lloyd make the reader "aware of the waste of three lives rather than of any ultimate happiness beyond death" (Jones,1979,p.52).

Allen Raine's works rarely portray profound poverty but her depiction of the peasantry does not rest entirely on stereotypes. They are not quaint rustics but, like many of Anne Beale's characters, are "distinct and recognisable people" (Jones,1979,p.59). Her subject matter, in all of her novels, was the west Wales community, but her treatment of this community differed from that of Caradoc

Evans. His direct attack on "chapel-bound slavery", and his representation of the way in which the community (where he grew up) spoke English, went far beyond her attempts to portray a human society, 'warts and all'. Anthony Conran argues that

> The grotesque was revived in twentieth century Ireland and Wales as an offensive weapon, against the cosiness of the middlebrows. In Caradoc Evans ... the grotesque becomes a measure of the seriousness of the writing.
>
> (Conran,1982,p.156)

Yet he maintains that, for Caradoc Evans, the need to use the grotesque stems from "the violent necessity of having to change culture and language in one's teens" (p.161).

Allen Raine also spent her teenage years outside Wales and Sally Jones (1979) highlights similarities in the use of the grotesque in the writings of Allen Raine and Caradoc Evans. She cites an episode in Torn Sails, where Gwen chokes her sick baby while trying to administer a remedy prescribed by the local wise woman, in comparison with Old Nanni and her rats in *Be This Her Memorial* (first published in 1915):

> Viciously pounding the mouse, which had been cooked to a cinder ... she mixed the dark powder with some brown sugar and butter, and ... coaxed the little moaning baby to swallow ...
>
> (Raine,1898,p.174)

> Her hands were clasped tightly together, as though guarding some great treasure. The minister ... prised them apart ... A roasted rat revealed itself.
>
> (Evans,1953,p.101)

Allen Raine's rats in the coal mine of A Welsh Witch played a more conventional role and gnawed at the body of a dead miner. Yet the author's ability to include the macabre, and her sharp portrayal of the members of a community, were in general overlooked or underrated, and when the content and style of Caradoc Evans's My People (1915), aroused such anger from Welsh reviewers and readers, it was the "idyllic and charming" work of Allen Raine which was quoted as a counterbalance to his" (Jones,1979,p.85). Sally Jones (1979) argues that one reason why Allen Raine's reputation has suffered since about 1950 is the widespread acceptance that the Anglo-Welsh tradition began in 1915 with Evans's publication, which "set the style and tone for much that was to follow in Anglo-Welsh Literature" (Williams,1970,p.98). Writers before this time were generally assumed to be English people who were using the Welsh landscape as a romantic backdrop to their novels.

Joseph Keating's novels challenge T.L. Williams's argument that, prior to Caradoc Evans's publication, the only view of Wales had come from the "pretty pictures of Allen Raine and other female writers" (Williams,1970,p.2), but his works do little to promote favourable images of Welsh women. Meic Stephens (1986) argues that Allen Raine's attitude to Welsh life appears to be closer to that of Caradoc Evans's view in My People than to Richard Llewellyn's (1939) nostalgic viewpoint (although she deals with her characters more sympathetically than Evans). The images of Welsh womanhood which Evans portrays are not ones that would find favour with many, but perhaps they were a foreshadowing of the self-sufficient attitude that

Welsh women would need to develop to overcome the trials which they were to face during the Great War.

Women's attitude to employment varied according to class and education but in general, working class women did not envisage themselves undertaking full-time, paid work all of their adult lives. "Practically all looked forward to marriage as an escape from work" (Roberts,1988,p.15), and in the years leading up to the First World War, "Married women continued to believe firmly that their primary commitment was to home and family" (Lewis,1986,p.4). However, the increased demand for female labour during the years of the First World War provided women with increased opportunities for escaping their cages. Despite the fact that women had consistently been regarded as the weaker sex, they were encouraged to take on traditionally 'male' jobs. This obviously created a tension between the needs of the country in crisis, and the (often solidly) entrenched opinion that "a woman's place was in the home" (Evans,1990). However, there was a distinct media campaign to encourage women into war work and new stereotypes such as the "'munitionette', the VAD, or the landgirl" (Beddoe,1987,p.31) were promoted. While women's contribution to the war effort was suitably acclaimed (Braybon & Summerfield,1987) there was little reflection of such activities in the novels published during these years.

In Wales, women took up clerical positions, worked in shops, on public transport, as drivers, on the land, and in a variety of jobs within the post office. Yet in the *South Wales Echo* in early 1916, advertisements for domestic service were still in the

majority. It was not until the end of 1916 that there was an increase in the number of jobs outside domestic service when the conscription of men into the Services allowed for the expansion of female labour into male dominated occupations. Women also worked in the munition factories which were both unhealthy and dangerous. However, once the war was over they were expected to resume their traditional roles. Although some women employed in office work and those working on the trams as conductors were able to retain their jobs, public sympathy was being turned against them by the media and subsequently against those women who claimed benefit after being made redundant (Beddoe,1987;1991).

These women were portrayed as "slackers"; the general attitude was that if they needed employment, they should go into domestic service where there was a severe shortage, but this was not what young women wanted. The First World War allowed women to be seen in a different role from that of wife and mother but women were expected to return "to home and duty" after the country's need had been fulfilled and their usefulness had expired (Beddoe,1991). Despite the 1919 Sex Disqualification Act, the resurrection of the domestic ideology was pushing women back into their cages.

There was not a great outpouring of fiction from Welsh women during the war years, but the romantic novelist, Edith Nepean, (1890-1969), who was possibly influenced by the Allen Raine's success, wrote her first novel during this time. However, it does not reflect the era in which it was written. She wrote thirty five novels in total, and the first, Gwyneth of the Welsh Hills (1928), was published in

1917. Her subsequent "Welsh" novels deal mainly with gypsy traditions and legends set against a superficial background of Welsh life. They are essentially tourist novels and the advertisement in one fly-leaf intensifies this view:

> Edith Nepean's Welsh Novels ... Here are the mountains and lakes of Wales, and the novelist who opens a casement upon their loveliness has earned our gratitude.
> (Illustrated London News, 1928, in the reprint of Gwyneth of the Welsh Hills).

There is a strong flavour of Caradoc Evans (to whom she expressed gratitude for his encouragement) in the portrayal of the Welsh peasantry in the earlier works, and her depiction of many of the characters is stereotyped. "Gwilym, like most of his race, was possessed of a beautiful voice" (Nepean,1928,p.33) and of his mother, Jane, "The divine light of motherhood softened her hardness endowing her with an expression of sublime tenderness" (p.65), yet she was "very hard and unforgiving. She had no pity for the evildoer" (p.38). The author's attitude to the double standard is exemplified by Lord Pryse's remark that, "Very often men who have sowed their wild oats in their youth turn out to be the best husbands" (Nepean,1928,p.195), yet the women who fall foul of the moral code generally suffer severe penalties. Edith Nepean extends her use of stereotypes and the reader is not surprised to learn that Gwyneth sings well. The author's later works also follow the same pattern of stereotyped characters and images of women.

Rhoda Broughton was still publishing during this period, but again the novels are not set in Wales. Her final novel, A Fool in Her Folly (1920), deals with the issue of unsuitable literature for young girls and is set in a time when the prevailing Victorian

tradition believed, as Marie Belloc Lowndes wrote in her introduction to the novel, that "professional authorship was not at all suitable for ladies". Allen Raine appears to have challenged this statement, but, as previously discussed, it would be unprofitable to look to her work for an overt challenge to the position of women in society. As a writer the story was of more importance to her and on the whole her heroines lack real spirit. The doubled female characters are often more realistic, yet there were no conspicuous New Women in Allen Raine's fiction. Given that the new woman was "a journalistic and literary construction" but with a "basis in reality" (Bland,1987), and that she was mostly considered to have her origins in the educated young women of the middle classes, it could be argued that Allen Raine's subject matter and settings did not afford her the opportunity to use this stereotype. While her representation of Welsh women was not a blatant challenge to the gender roles which the fiction of the second half of the nineteenth century prescribed (Rowbotham,1989), her questioning of the *status quo*, within the community she depicts, suggests that she believed it was impossible for women to live up to such ideals of exalted womanhood and that they should not feel constrained to try.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. VIRGINS, VICTIMS AND VIPERS

1920 - 1949

As the shock waves of The Great War receded, many women assumed that it would be possible to build on the advances of the past decades. The social freedoms enjoyed during the war, the gaining of the vote and wider opportunities for education fostered the belief that women's position had improved and would continue to do so. There was a reluctance by working-class women to return to domestic service during the post-war period and women's magazines were extolling the range of career opportunities which were supposedly available. However, this idealism was short-lived and women were dismissed from their war-time post as fast, if not faster, than they were taken on. By the end of 1919 the majority of them had returned to the home (Beddoe,1989).

There were gains for women between 1919 and 1925 such as the Sex Disqualification Act, the reform of the divorce law and infant custody laws, but the right of women to vote on the same terms as men was not gained until 1928. By this time there were only eleven women in Parliament and only one, Margaret Bondfield, held Cabinet Office (Mitchell,1970). During the 1920s there was a split of the feminist movement into old and new feminism. Old feminism, favoured by career woman, focused on equal rights and opportunities. However, new feminism identified its prime objective as an improvement of the position and conditions of women (especially working-class) in the home (Beddoe,1989) and in Wales the precepts of the new feminist movement gained many supporters.

Elizabeth Andrews was a miner's wife who was active in the foundation of the Women's Labour League (Jones,1991). She was born in 1882 when there was a " rigid and narrow outlook ... on woman's place in society" (Andrews,1956,Preface), and she maintains that from the 1920s onwards she "had to try and teach women not to be afraid of freedom" (p.42). The propaganda campaigns for better standards of living and social reforms earned the League the title of "a lot of interfering women" from the local Councils. Despite her own political involvement, Elizabeth Andrews' message to married women was still that "The home is a woman's workshop" (p.42).

In general, there was little paid employment for Welsh women between the wars and little opportunity for women to work in industry until just before the Second World War when light industries started to develop in South Wales. For working-class women domestic service was often the only option and they were actively encouraged by the Government to undertake domestic training courses (Beddoe,1990). Attitudes towards women workers during the inter-war years were similar to those in pre-war times and for working-class women the period

> saw a full flowering of the domestic ideology ... It is impossible ... to assess whether women really chose this kind of life or whether they accepted it because it was the 'norm'.
>
> (Roberts,1988,p.73)

However, the depressed economic climate forced many women to seek work. The numbers of Welsh girls going into domestic service by 1928 provoked The Times to comment that "Formerly girls were discouraged by their parents from going into domestic service ... It was once considered beneath the dignity of a miner's family" (Smith and Francis,1980,p.48).

Despite continued debates on suitable education for girls and an increase in the number of children registered for secondary education in Wales between 1914 and 1920, the number of girls remained low and for the daughters of working-class families even lower (Evans,1990; Beddoe,1989). During the inter-war years this situation gradually improved but problems of gender and sex-stereotyping in education were not addressed until a much later date (Evans,1990; Beddoe,1989). The number of Welsh women going to University and to teacher training colleges increased during the inter-war years but the total also remained low. However, in the Rhondda during the 1930s there was a surplus of women teachers as a result of the marriage bar, and this enforced creation of a sisterhood developed into an embryonic protest movement "against the conditions of other women in less fortunate circumstances ... a bright spark that would turn ... into the bonfire of the feminist movement" (Davies,1994,p.53-54).

The predominant image promoted by the media throughout the 1920s and 1930s was once again that of the stereotyped, happy housewife who put home and family before career. Her opposites were the flapper, spinsters and career women. "The convention that marriage was a woman's normal fulltime occupation was still very strong" (Braybon & Summerfield,1987,p.147). The undesirable stereotypes were constructed to ridicule the aspirations and behaviour of modern women, to warn them where their actions would lead, and to instruct them that they could be 'redeemed' by marriage. The portrayal of spinsters during this period attempted to demonstrate some kind of failure on the part of an unmarried, woman and it was suggested that higher education would atrophy a woman's 'natural femininity' and make her

unattractive to men. Career women were often portrayed as successful within their profession, yet they usually succumbed to the lure of domesticity. Those who attempted to combine work, marriage and a family normally suffered, or saw their family fall apart (Beddoe,1989).

Magazines glorified the role of the wife and mother, yet the ideal world which they created almost totally ignored the problems of the working-classes and of mass unemployment (Winship,1987; Beddoe,1989). What these publications provided was mass escapism, and during the 1930s the talking movies played the same role (Beddoe,1987). Annette Kuhn (1988) argues that there was an attempt to reinforce a pre-war patriarchal code through a medium which was believed to have had a predominantly working-class audience. In Wales, film going was immensely popular during the inter-war period yet the dialogue and characterization of films such as Proud Valley, for example, resulted in the kind of "caricatured way Welshness was to be depicted in British films for the next twenty years" (Stead,1988,p.172). The American production of Richard Llewellyn's How Green Was My Valley was full of sentimental clichés, yet the film conveyed "such a powerful sense of family and community that many filmgoers around the world ... could only think of Wales in these terms" (Stead,1988,p.172). The realities of the inter-war years would have made a far less palatable picture; it was the writers of Wales rather than the film-makers who recorded the desperate plight of families in the 1930s (Smith,1988).

Continuous housework, childcare and problems of poor housing and high rents intensified the misery of married women in Wales during the years of the economic

slump and the Depression (Beddoe,1990). Malnutrition and poor health escalated and the female mortality rate was high (Gittins,1982). "These mining women force an armistice from the dreariness, but at a cost to their looks and lives" (Coombes,1945,p.76). Despite the deprivations, those women of the south Wales valleys who conquered their environment became "tidy women" (Crook,1982), "a term that ... connotated respectability". Their week was dominated by a strict regime of chores and their lives by "a received moral and behavioural code, shaped by Nonconformity and policed by women themselves" (Beddoe,1990,p.204).

> The sanctions women laid upon each other could be as subtle as the simple exclusion of a woman from the complete intimacy and friendship of the community of women. They could also be as overt as ostracism, public disapproval or actual unfriendliness ... the women were, in general, very supportive of one another ... Chastity, or at least its public show, was ferociously enforced by mothers.
>
> (Crook,1982,p.41-43)

Despite the dominance of the domestic ideology in the mining areas, paid domestic work was not seen as a threat to this philosophy in that women were still fulfilling their natural role, and during the economic hardships of the late 1920s and the 1930s many women supplemented the family income in any way that they could (Gittins,1982;Beddoe,1990). The majority of women frequently denied themselves adequate food thus intensifying their existing poor health. There is a general picture, therefore, of these women as the stereotypical Welsh Mam, "an icon ... the Angel-Mother ... a mixture of reality and myth" (Beddoe,1991,p.207). That is, her sufferings and self-sacrifice may have been real enough, but the representation of the 'Mam' figure as having power was a myth. Despite managing the family budget her

world was still a domestic, private one where she was economically dependent on men and had little knowledge of or access to adequate birth control (Beddoe,1991).

The end of the 1930s brought another World War and the propaganda of the 1914-1918 war was repeated (Braybon & Summerfield,1987). The dramatic changes within the labour market brought about through the Government's mobilization of women in March 1941, and conscription of single women aged twenty to thirty in December 1941, also affected Welsh women, and as the war progressed the number of married women directed into work increased (Verill-Rhys & Beddoe,1992). For many it was a time of great enjoyment and personal freedom (despite the dangers to which some were exposed), and an opportunity to acquire new skills (Braybon & Summerfield,1987). Many of these women carried the double burden of coping with a home on their own and the responsibility of war work. Some registered as Conscientious Objectors, but Ursula Masson (1987) argues that the recorded figures are an inaccurate reflection of Welsh women's opposition to war (Fish,1993). For others there was the chance to serve with the forces. Parachutes and Petticoats: Welsh women writing on the Second World War, (Verill-Rhys & Beddoe,1992) offers a comprehensive picture of the experiences of women from all levels of society.

The Welsh writer Hilda Vaughan (1892-1990) was educated privately and travelled extensively in Europe with her mother but served in a Red Cross Hospital during the First World War. For the last two years of the war she was the organising secretary of the Women's Land Army in Brecon and Radnorshire and became

increasingly involved with the farming community. While she did not incorporate her own war experiences into her novels to any great extent, G.F. Adam argues that one prominent theme of her work is the "latent antagonism between ... the native farmers and the English settlers in Hilda Vaughan's border counties" (Adam,1948,p.18).

She published her first novel, The Battle to the Weak, in 1925. It is set in the rural border counties of Wales and relates the tale of two lovers, Esther and Rhys. The main characters of the novel are the ordinary people of the farms and the main themes are of duty and self-sacrifice. Christopher Newman argues that Hilda Vaughan was

> externalising her own inner conflicts and ... rebellion against the restraints of an over-conventional upbringing ... and the story is a story of conflicts - ... of the generations, of the exploitation of the young by the old, and of women by men ... All these conflicts are presented as aspects of a patriarchal society in a state of dissolution.
> (Newman,1981,p.23)

The novel opens in the early years of the twentieth century and highlights the lack of opportunities for women in the region in relation to education and employment (domestic service and, to a lesser degree, later in the novel, shop-work). The author also focuses attention on the economic dependence of women, their subjugation by (often brutal) husbands or brothers, the financial and social obstacles to separation or divorce, and the detrimental effects of a lack of artificial birth-control.

The heroine, Esther, is "a martyr to duty" but is compassionate and has "a deep reserve of moral strength" (Newman,1981,p.23). She sacrifices her own chance of happiness with Rhys by agreeing to remain with her sister, Gladys, "for as long as

she lives", after Gladys' back has been broken by her drunken father. Further chances of happiness are thwarted by her mother's illness and her unmarried cousin's pregnancy. Nell Tretower, heroine of Her Father's House (1930), also demonstrates these tendencies but breaks away from family oppression sooner than Esther. The delineation of many of the female characters reinforces the image of Welsh women as self-sacrificing.

The author emphasises the continuation of the male attitude that women were possessions: "She is bein' *my* missus" (p.9). This is also the attitude of Daniel Hafod in Harvest Home (1936): "if she were my wife ... I'd give her a beating would learn her better manners" (p.89). Many of the male characters display violent tendencies and possibly reflect the author's awareness that many men were ignoring the 1887 Act which withdrew the right of a man to beat his wife.

The importance placed on physical beauty is highlighted by Esther's mother. "Her manner was the more timid because she understood what small influence she had over him would vanish with her physical attractions" (p.10), an attraction which the harshness of life in a farming community plus continuous pregnancies would soon end. John Bevan considers that Esther was "ordinarily ... hard-working, silent and submissive - so much, indeed of what a daughter should be that he had seldom noticed her" (p.89). These views of filial duty are shared by Mark Pugh, uncle of Nell Tretower (Her Father's House), and while Nell challenges these ideals she is not portrayed as sinful but as a woman with strength of character.

Esther is compared with her cousin Megan, who is full of vitality and although "instinct had its way with her" (p.189) she is not portrayed as promiscuous but more as the victim of a weak man. This image is repeated in Harvest Home (1936), when Lizzie, the maid, is seduced by Daniel Hafod. She is, on the one hand, portrayed as "Eve" when Daniel's mother warns him not let Lizzie " go 'ticing you to your fall" (p.23). On the other hand, Lizzie expresses an honest, open attitude to sex yet is not promiscuous but again, more of a victim, as she only concedes to Daniel Hafod's advances when she believes that he was going to 'court her close' (leading to marriage).

Esther's mother is also portrayed as a victim. She has been locked into a sterile marriage for years but lacks the strength to leave her husband. Not only does she fear him but she is afraid to deviate from the religious code and afraid of the social ostracization which would follow. She is also financially dependent on him. After her father's death, Esther, as a spinster, becomes economically dependent on her brothers. When she questions a business venture that one brother makes she is told that "Women is havin' no sense about business" (p.243); her brother demonstrates his absorption of the patriarchal code by stating that she is only "an 'oman whose work is in the house" (p.245). The narrator of Joseph Keating's novel The Marriage Contract (1914) had also commented on woman's lack of business sense as Delia's "notions, as far as the world's business was concerned were hopelessly confused" (p.5).

At the opening of Book Two the First World War has taken place but there is little detail of the effect of the war on Wales, apart from a very brief mention of government agricultural policies and conscription tribunals. Rhys has returned to Wales after fighting in the war in France but he is embittered and wants to help the younger generation to become better educated. "War's a vile business ... It's made me cry out for a wider tolerance in the world" (p.249). This attitude was probably shared by the author and developed during her experience of war-work. Rhys criticizes Esther for putting duty before desire and argues that "the church- and chapel-going people of Wales are all obsessed ... with their family ties ... They recognise no larger duty" (p.249). He vocalises a changing attitude to religion in general and presumably reflects the author's awareness of the "mass apathy and indifference" which followed the disestablishment of the Welsh Church in 1920 (Jones, 1990).

Rhys's interest in education is profound but he is concerned at the management of it in a country like Wales. He expresses fears that could be the author's own.

> "Your parson friend wants me to appoint a committee of all the unread fools in the neighbourhood. I know what that would mean. They'd spend my money on cheap fiction, easy, sugary, untrue to life. Once the young have had their taste vitiated by it, they lose their appetite for anything that demands an effort of their slack minds."
>
> (Vaughan,1925,p.256)

He is portrayed as an idealist who wants "women to be treated fair, and children to be given their chanst whilst they're young" (p.299), and his views echo those of Sir John Gibson who supported the feminist cause in Wales at the turn of the century (Jones,1993). Esther finally rejects Church and State when she realises that by giving in to their pressure she was as weak as her mother. She defies her brother

and agrees to marry Rhys, although it appears that she is exchanging one cage for another. However, it is argued that she can obtain the key through the educational opportunities which she has been offered.

In The Soldier And The Gentlewoman (1932), the author highlights women's advancement in society but also the inadequacies which remained unresolved. Frances has broadened her intellectual horizons and has worked in the secretariat of the suffrage organisation but she argues that the education she and her sister received from their governess was totally inept.

> "No science, no mathematics, no economics - nothing that gave us the least inkling of the world in which we were going to live ... people needn't positively hinder girls from finding out the truth about anything ... Heaven knows, girls' schools are still stupid enough, but at least parents aren't as blind as they used to be."
>
> (Vaughan,1932,p.76)

Although Elisabeth Inglis-Jones's novel Crumbling Pageant (discussed below) was published in the same year as The Soldier And The Gentlewoman, it is set around 1850. In this novel too, however, the author also expressed her concerns at the lack of educational and professional opportunity for girls in Wales. The heroine, Catherine Jones, had a limited education but she has a natural shrewdness. However, she is told that ""It's bad luck being born clever and pretty and a girl, in an infernal country like this, where you'll probably never meet a soul worth considering"" (p.144). Eiluned Lewis' novel The Captain's Wife (1943) also denigrates the inferior education for girls during the late nineteenth century and acknowledges that it equipped them for little other than an "upholstered cage". Lettie knew "the limits of Miss Carlyle's little school" (p.107) where

> Reading, writing and spelling were the three subjects for which her school were justly renowned in the neighbourhood ... pupils worked through the whole of the Tutor ... without ever gaining the faintest idea of what they meant ... Geography was acquired from a diminutive book ... History, General Knowledge and Scripture were taught by catechisms ... pupils learned the answers and rarely troubled themselves with the questions ...
>
> (Lewis,1944,p.109-110)

The girls, however, excelled at needlework.

Unlike Anne Beale, Hilda Vaughan's authorial intrusions are infrequent and she allows her characters and situations to develop the central themes, especially that of self-sacrifice, of the strong yielding to the weak, which inform all of her works (Newman,1981). Her Father's House (1930) is set in the late nineteenth century and deals with the situation of Hannah Tretower who has married into the gentry but finds their habits distasteful. She defies convention by leaving her husband and taking her two daughters to live with her unmarried brother arguing that

> "I know 'tis unheard of for a wife to leave her husband, but ... how can I suffer such goings on? ... You didn't tell me his house was full of naked women -pictures and images ... nor what books he was reading - a married man! - all about love ... And he was requiring me to act in a way I saw immodest, even between married folk."
>
> (Vaughan,1930,p.11)

Hannah is one Welsh woman who has learned the lessons of non-conformity well and her characterisation reverses the images of the Blue Books.

The story is narrated by the elder daughter, Eleanor (Nell), who, at thirteen years of age, becomes re-acquainted with her father. Hannah believes that when their son died he lost interest in her as she had failed to produce the necessary male heir. Women in this community are portrayed as second-class citizens, or more generally

as possessions of men. Mr Matthias Jones, a local man who made his fortune in London with tea-houses, discusses the girls' future with Hannah: "What do you think to put them at when they come a bit bigger? ... Keeping them two gels at home 'ont lead to nothing. London's the place in which to market prime goods" (p.93). This image of women as cattle is one which frequently occurs in the work of Caradoc Evans.

'The Master', as Nell's father is referred to throughout the novel, reinforces the belief in the innate differences between men and women and in the theory that woman can either be wholly good or bad. In general, he seeks to be preserved from "the Woman's Touch - pincushions, ribbons, frills that hide the clean shape of things made for use ... man's a designer, woman's only a decorator" (p.63). Mark Pugh, the uncle, is a deacon of the chapel and he represents the prevailing Non-conformist and paternalistic attitudes of late nineteenth century Wales. However, Nell considers that he is a self-righteous bigot. He argues that if Hannah had listened to him then she would

> "have been living with me, unmarried, in that state most favoured by myself and the Apostle Paul, helping me in your humble 'oman's way to uphold Horeb, and causing no talk."
>
> (Vaughan,1930,p.8)

He is unforgiving and argues that Hannah should not have had children. Shortly after Hannah, dies he marries a young woman but sees her predominantly as a strong, healthy housekeeper. His behaviour suggests that when there are no dependent female relatives left, marriage is the price a man has to pay for a well run home.

The younger daughter, Bella, is fair, pretty and generally obedient. Her mother describes her as "a tidy little maid" in comparison with Nell, despite holding the belief that beauty in a woman was a "snare of the Evil One" (p.21) which lead women astray. Yet for Bella the constraints prove too heavy and she serves to illustrate the detrimental effects of oppression and subjugation on women, another prominent theme in the writings of Hilda Vaughan. When Bella becomes pregnant Nell sacrifices her chance to work in London and allows Bella to take her place. However, after a number of conflicts with her mother and uncle, Nell leaves home to find her sister, but Bella has become a prostitute and encourages Nell to join her. The contrasting of fair, complacent Bella who becomes a harlot, with dark, troublesome Nell, who retains her dignity, reflects Amy Dillwyn's preoccupation with appearance and reality as discussed in Chapter Two, and Hilda Vaughan also echoes some of Anne Beale's concerns with the nature/nurture debate. Bella and Nell are compared with the ripening buds of the cherry and pear trees, but "whether to bring forth sweet fruit or to be nipped by untimely weather or cankered by blight, none as yet could say" (p.92).

Hilda Vaughan introduces the issue of prostitution into her fiction but deals with it superficially. It is acknowledged as a fact of life and a situation into which many women are forced through a lack of suitable alternatives or by uncharitable families. However, there is no mention of the profession in Wales, unlike in Rhys Davies's work, Count Your Blessings (1932). In that novel, Blodwen Evans, "conceived in sin and born in corruption, escapes from the Valley to a discreet, civilised, suburban brothel in Cardiff" (Rees,1975,p.15) where she is expected to improve her mind.

Rhys Davies suggests that the brothel offered a more controlled and disciplined but fairer environment than the hypocritical confines of the Non-conformist mining valleys.

Nell refuses Bella's offer but remains in London for a number of years where her work as a waitress and a domestic servant highlights the poor conditions of employment experienced by many Welsh girls (Beddoe,1987). Eventually Nell's former suitor, Evan, finds her and they save to get married. In their dreams of a life together Hilda Vaughan formulates an image which reappears (and becomes a clichéd characteristic of the Welsh 'Mam') in one of the most commercially successful books from Wales, Richard Llewelyn's How Green Was My Valley (1939), when Evan tells Nell, "I'll ... pour my savings into your lap" (p.219).

The author explores the social indoctrination of women and their acceptance of the concept of woman's suffering as a natural consequence of man's dominance: "Her body still throbbed with the pain that had been Evan's pleasure. It was natural, she thought, to welcome pain if the one who caused it were beloved" (p.233). Yet Nell's subsequent pregnancy and labour develop the belief that women were superior to men: "Was this great suffering given only to women ... Was she not almost the equal of God, for on her was laid the ... burden of creation" (p.245). Tess Cosslett argues that "childbirth is a relatively new subject in literature, especially when narrated from the woman's point-of view ... [and] in nineteenth century novels it usually occurs off-stage" (Cosslett,1991,p.221-222). Hilda Vaughan's fictional account of childbirth is innovative in the work of Welsh writers, but the description

of this delivery scene (although not idyllic) was not as graphic as that of Rhys Davies's in Marianne (1951).

Nell inherits her father's estate and the strength of the character which the author has developed encourages the reader to believe that Nell (and by implication all women) would be capable of managing it alone. Although Evan and Nell are reunited it is implicit that it will be Nell who takes control. She is not cast as the stereotyped, Victorian heroine but she is virtuous and has formulated a personal philosophy which stems more from Nature than from Church or State.

An obsession with the land is a theme which occurs in various forms in many of Hilda Vaughan's works including The Soldier And The Gentlewoman (1932), set near the west Wales coast just after the First World War. The anglicized Dick Einon-Thomas inherits Plâs Einon and expects that his widowed aunt and one of his cousins, who are still in residence, will move out. Gwenllian has hands which are "cold and glossy, and narrow, like a serpent" (p.24). She covets the property and land and is willing to fight for it (although not in the way of her legendary namesake). She wants to restore the property to its former glory and considers that Dick has usurped her inheritance. Her frustration would have been recognised by many women, as

> in her world, there was no power but through them [men]; they were in possession, hour by hour and generation by generation ... they invaded her integrity, usurped the inheritance of her soul ... It was they who streaked her quiet, decorous years with hatred and passion - the black and the scarlet, and they always who drove her back into her cage.
>
> (Vaughan,1932,p.38)

Yet she had learned to maintain an outward calm while turning her hatred of all men inwards. Hilda Vaughan has reversed the theory that education turned women into shrews, as the other cousin, Frances, the forward thinker ,is a warm, open character while Gwenllian, who clings to old traditions, has become venomous in defence of her way of life. She is portrayed as cynical; she manipulates Dick into marriage and they have a son. She has a keen business mind and manages the estate, while he is careless with money and this strains their relationship. She wants another son to ensure the line of succession for the Einon-Thomases and once again she seduces Dick, yet this is not the wanton promiscuity of the Blue Books but a cold, calculated act.

Near the climax of the novel Dick becomes ill and Gwenllian deliberately accelerates his death but her ownership of the estate does not bring her happiness. When Frances realises where Gwenllian's avarice and obsession with tradition have led her, she leaves Plâs Einon for London. She knows that "She could not go back. She would never go back" (p.281). This concept of always looking or moving towards the future is repeated in Iron And Gold (1948: written and published in America as The Fair Woman in 1942), when the mother-in-law of the heroine claims that "Happy is the woman that is never looking back" (p.15). This could be construed as the author's message to women in general.

Hilda Vaughan's concern with female inheritance and/or the desire for control of land or property (even if it is through control of children) is amplified in Harvest Home (1936). The novel is set around 1800 near a south-west Wales port and its

main theme is "innocence threatened by cunning and violence" (Newman,1981,p.62), or "the ancient conflict between good and evil, moral light and darkness" (Adams,1948,p.95). Daniel Hafod's mother has endured a life of virtual slavery in her brother's house as she covets the estate for her son. The image of a mother willing to sacrifice the quality of her own life for her child is one which became commonplace. "But a mother's love ... will drive a woman through fire to get for her child what he's wanting" (p.230). She is portrayed as a manipulative schemer but whether the author is suggesting that this is the result of her experience or that it is simply her nature, is unclear.

In many of the novels discussed previously, it has been the mothers who arranged, or attempted to organize the children's marriages and this work is no exception. Daniel Hafod's mother aspires to a rich bride for her son and he agrees: "Yes. I'll not look at a girl that hasn't wealth to sweeten her"" (p.19). When he is offered a relative's daughter he considers her upbringing suitable, as she has been "reared to be a wealthy farmer's wife", and she "could keep my house in style after Mother's gone" (p.80). These images serve to highlight the male attitude that women were possessions.

Although the novel is set in the early nineteenth century and the author has attempted to match the style of the period, one modern introduction is the more explicit description of courting/sexual scenes. Whereas Anne Beale would allow her characters to kiss chastely and then leave the rest to the reader's imagination, Amy Dillwyn obviously saw such scenes as unimportant within her writing. Allen Raine

allowed for some physical contact, although the description usually ended after the hero rested his head on the heroine's breast, but Hilda Vaughan deals with sexual desires in an open and explicit way and acknowledges female sexuality, even in her older characters such as the mother of Owain in Iron And Gold. This could also be interpreted as an attempt to highlight both the 'double standard' (Thomas,1959), and many women's continued ignorance of sexual matters and contraception during the period in which Harvest Home was written.

> "'Tis only one thing they're wanting of an 'oman. If a maid knew all afore she made the bed she'll have to lie on, she'd choose goosefeather, not straw. 'Tis comfort do make a woman's life; and poverty do mar it."
>
> (Vaughan,1936,p.225)

Newman argues that the central plot bears a resemblance to Richardson's Pamela and that the heroine, Eiluned, "has some of the qualities of her prototype, particularly a capacity to survive" (Newman,1981,p.63). She is portrayed as a Madonna-like figure with a "gentle, passionless smile" (p.54). She is attractive but rather a colourless character and "like all good women she had a core of hardness" (p.74). Daniel Hafod admires her for her "virginity not of the body only, but of the soul" (p.74), yet he accuses her of having "turned Methodist" when she will not go to the fair with him. Another character also blames Methodism for inhibiting women's behaviour. She says that Eiluned is

> "a quiet mouse - a Methodistical sort, the way a good few o' them be these days ... Times be sadly changed ... This John Ellias [sic] and others o' his kind - preaching and praying and pulling long faces! No sense in it for young folks ... We danced every Sunday in the churchyard - after prayers, mind you ... The parsons saw no harm in it then."
>
> (Vaughan,1936,p.163)

The Welsh Methodists separated from the Church of England in 1811 and it appears that the author is suggesting that religion was attempting to shape the behaviour and pattern of Welsh women's lives well before the storm aroused by the 1847 Blue Books. However, while Eiluned is portrayed as a gentle, good woman, she has a strength of character which sustains her and enables her to stand up for her personal convictions. At the end of the novel she conveys a message to all women experiencing or anticipating pressure from society: "And she understood that to yield to the persuasion of others ... would be a betrayal of her own nature" (p.281).

Daniel Hafod is rebuffed by Eiluned and so he seduces Lizzie but then he tries to transform her into Eiluned by recalling tales of magic and mythology, especially that of Blodeuwedd, the woman of flowers from the Mabinogi. The author's interest in Celtic mythology and folklore is repeated in later scenes and in a later novel, Iron And Gold, where the heroine has feet like "flower petals". However, it is possible to interpret the use of the Blodeuwedd legend as a parallel to the attempted shaping of women by paternalistic and religious principles throughout the ages, and particularly in relation to the campaigns surrounding the two world wars where women were expected to behave like chameleons.

Iron And Gold, as mentioned above, has a mythological basis and relates the story of a farmer, Owain, who marries a mountain spirit, and tells of his struggle to keep her in his world. It is set in rural Wales but the time in which the story takes place is not apparent. Newman (1981) argues that the novel considers the degree of pressure that everyday life exerts on the imagination, and that the heroine's

disappearance at the end suggests that the pressures are often too great. However, the women characters do not add considerably to the images of Welsh women already discussed as the heroine, Glythin, is a spirit-woman who becomes human to marry Owain. He wants her to

> stay more fair than other women but be in kind as they were, the compliant wives, content and busy, tamed to their husband's pleasure, untroublesome companions, smiling at board, a ladle in the hand that deftly served, in bed most loving when desired, in public modest, cause for pride but never spur to jealousy, at all times tender and good-humoured.
>
> (Vaughan,1948,p.108)

From Owain's point-of-view, she became "a dutiful housewife, because he wished her to be so" and learned "to bake and brew, to braid her hair tidy and to go to church in stockings like a Christian" (p.70). While this idealised but limited figure may be taken to illustrate Newman's point about the suppression or destruction of the imagination in the novel, it is also representative of the effect of Church and State ideology on the construction of the female.

The portrayal of Owain's mother recreates the image of a hard-working, self-sacrificing woman, who wants nothing more than to see her son do well in life; to choose his wife and live to see her grandchildren born. Although she voices her discontent at the lot of women, "What has my life been but baking and brewing for men?" (p.10), she argues that it is "the lot of a mother to give her child whatever he do crave" (p.27). She paints a bleak picture of women's future: "Doing the same work for our men, always. That's how it has been. How 'twill ever be. A chain o' women. All alike. Every link. That life may hold unbroken" (p.122). Yet Glythin breaks this chain. As in most of the novels discussed so far, it is usually the women

of the younger generation who are the agents of change. Owain's mother becomes senile (or insane) and is frequently associated with rats, echoing the imagery of Allen Raine and Caradoc Evans (discussed in Chapter Three).

Pardon And Peace (1945) is set mainly in Wales during the inter-war period, and focuses on the theme of duty and desire. The novel opens just after First World War when Mark Osbourne, an English painter, returns to Wales to find Flora Lloyd whom he had met briefly before the war. The theme of self-sacrifice is used once again, for Flora, who has an air of "passive endurance", takes care of her elderly father, her husband (a former suitor who had been severely injured in the war) and their child. However, her characterization, and that of Connie Thomas, her modern-thinking counterpart, lack the substance of the author's earlier works.

Another author who used fiction to express her concern with land and its inheritance was Elisabeth Inglis-Jones (1900-), who was born in London but brought up on the family estate near Lampeter. It was through her biographical works that she achieved literary fame but between 1929 and 1948 she published six romantic novels. Her main female characters are usually English and disdainful of the Welsh, but covetous of the Welsh estates which could be gained through marriage.

Starved Fields (1929) is set in Cardiganshire at the end of the nineteenth century and introduces the reader to the English Anne Skelton, tall, slim, graceful, a "goddess-like creature", who responds to the advances of Owen Morgan "with a zest born of love and relief" (p.46) as she sees him "as a wonderful way of escape for her"

(p.47). Her attitude towards the Welsh is shared by the heroine of Aunt Albinia (1948), who considers that "Welsh servants are very inferior to English ones" (p.56) and, as for the tenants, "she hated their stuffy, smoky kitchens" (p.76). Servants are not portrayed favourably in Starved Fields either. Anne is served by "a dishevelled young woman" with "clotted boots" and "voluminous flannel skirts" (p.49).

Crumbling Pageant (1932) is based on the same theme used by Hilda Vaughan in A Soldier And A Gentlewoman, of a woman obsessed with the restoration of a property, but also focuses on the effects of a mixed marriage between the Welsh Doctor Jones and an English governess, Alice Lake, and on the influence of mothers in general. Alice had romantic ideas of "big country houses and lavish splendours" and she "stuffed her child with these faded splendours as tight as you stuff a duckling" (p.17). Alice is also representative of the image of woman-as-invalid and Catherine reflects how "Mamma's ill-health hung like a blight over the house" (p.93).

The novel is set in the village of Clynnog, fifteen miles from Aberystwyth, and opens midway in the nineteenth century. The main character is Catherine Jones who becomes involved with the Morys family and grows to love their Morfa estate. The author highlights the restrictions of convention and community and presents an image of Wales as a repressive force. When Catherine boasts that she is different from other women, Richard Morys argues that it will not change her fate:

> "You'll never get away from here. When you grow up you'll marry ... order his rotten little house and bottle his fruit and bring up his

> children ... that's what you're booked for. Women are only fit for wives."
>
> (Inglis-Jones,1932,p.77)

On the death of her father Catherine inherits his house and £20,000 but becomes obsessed with the restoration of Morfa. However, she can only obtain it through marriage and her lawyer reminds her that "when you are married your husband may, if he chooses, control your property" (p.168). Despite her manipulation of her husband and neglect of her family's and her tenants' welfare, the estate still crumbles. As Morfa is entailed on the male line, she is forced to return to her old home when Lucian marries and claims his inheritance.

Catherine's daughter, Louise, is "silent and rebellious" (p.278), defiant, and protects Lucian from Catherine's venomous tongue. She is portrayed as an embryonic New Woman as she wants to work away from home and challenges the notion that she should seek a husband. Catherine reinforces the domestic ideology by arguing that Louise has "been reading a lot of nonsense about careers for women ... There's plenty for her to do at home ... She ought to marry ... she's very undutiful" (p.280).

Elisabeth Inglis-Jones does not dwell on the lives of the tenants, and while there is some recognition of the hardships many of them faced, she portrays them as possessions: "a decently-housed, decently-fed man yields a far higher percentage of labour than one who is half starved" (p.240). In the farming community there is a general picture of hard working women. Catherine's cousin, William, lives with his grandmother who had "the tired patient spirit of one to whom life has meant toil, and

living endurance. Even now, when the sands were low, she was working still" (p.26). Mai Lloyd who marries William, was

> a decent, respectable girl, renowned throughout the district for her butter-making and as strong and hard-working as a man. In this alone she was worth a lot of money, though when her father came to die Mai would be getting all he had into the bargain.
>
> (Inglis-Jones,1932,p.97)

She is representative of a paternalistic view of the value of woman, yet there is a suggestion that she is also materialistic: that she sees Penllan as a sound investment with herself as the stake. However, she

> would never be anything but the traditional farmer's wife, a relentless worker with neither time nor interest to spare for preserving the youth she would lose at five and twenty, nor words to waste.
>
> (Inglis-Jones,1932,p.100)

The harshness of life for farming women features in the work of a number of writers. The heroine of Margiad Evans's Country Dance (1932) relates how her mother is "up at five", and in The Wooden Doctor (1933) the twenty-seven year old Gwynneth Lloyd-Owen is small but strong and "brought comfort and order into the house and acquired a careworn expression before she was well into her teens" (p.178). Bert Coombes' description of his mother's life in a Herefordshire farming community in the latter part of the nineteenth century reinforces this picture of women's constant toil:

> My mother too - like all women of her class - with her work never finished. Hunting for eggs ... skimming the milk ... helping to rear and tend animals ... No holiday, week-day or Sunday, and no other prospect but to get greyer and weaker with the years.
>
> (Coombes,1939,p.12)

Although they may not have led a life of such unrelenting toil, Elisabeth Inglis-Jones portrays the women of the Welsh gentry as thrifty and shrewd. Mrs Hanmer was

> unyielding and practical ... undefeatable ... had dressed four daughters on twenty pounds a year apiece, found good husbands for two of them ... could force a shilling to do the work eighteen pence, break a girl to service as effectively as she could a horse to harness ... Add to this a tongue that could set a person down as thoroughly as it squeezed every iota of flavour out of a tag of scandal.
>
> (Inglis-Jones,1932,p.29)

Despite the period in which she was writing, there is very little mention of either of the world wars in her novels. While Hilda Vaughan's accounts of war-time were brief, Elisabeth Inglis-Jones' are briefer. In Aunt Albina, for example, the Great War is accorded little more than one line, but whether her choice of historical settings (which mostly avoid the war years) is a reflection of a lack of knowledge or experience, or a mechanism for escape, is unclear. Given her own background, it could be assumed that her preoccupation was with the disappearance of the dominance of the landed gentry "as the sale of the great estates continued unabated, reaching its climax in 1918-22" (Jones,1990,p.138).

Another writer who favoured historical novels was Edith Nepean. She continued to publish her "Welsh novels" during the inter-war period and well into the 1950s. They follow much the same pattern as the first (discussed in Chapter Three) and are full of romance, wild countryside, wild females, implausible plots, convenient accidents and deaths. Characters are named Cariad, Merlin and even Sir Anwyl Brenin, and there are the usual Megans, Peggis and Caradocs. There are gypsies, orphans, arranged marriages, shipwrecks, lost (and recovered) inheritances, parental

plans and children's rebellions, adultery, star-crossed lovers, primitive passions, preachers, Eisteddfods and foreign princes. The females are often scheming, manipulative, or wanton, yet the heroines usually have a degree of independence of spirit and resist oppression where possible. They are not afraid to challenge convention but their fate is usually marriage (to the man of their choice, of course). However, one feature that is often repeated in Edith Nepean's novels is that of female inheritance, and many of her heroines regain the family estates.

The fictional world of novelist and poet Eiluned Lewis (1900-1979), was much closer to reality and based on her own and her mother's family experiences. She was born at Newtown, Montgomeryshire, and was educated at the University of London. She entered journalism in Fleet Street and from 1931 to 1936 was assistant to the editor of The Sunday Times. Her first novel, Dew On The Grass (1934), is based on her childhood in Wales and was much acclaimed. However, the intrusions of adult life into the child's world within the novel do not add significantly to the imagery of Welsh womanhood. This is also the case with The Leaves Of The Tree (1953), which is set just before, during, and just after the Second World War. The author deals with issues such as community life in a time of crisis, the forms and effects of propaganda, and the memories and effects of childhood experiences. However, except for a brief episode when one of the central characters spends some of her schooldays in Wales as a refugee the novel is set in England.

The Captain's Wife (1943), is set in Pembrokeshire and opens in the year 1880. It focuses on the close, seagoing, farming community from which the author's mother's

people had come. The introduction to the main character, Lettice Peters, recounts some of the changes which the community had experienced since the days of her youth, and the stirrings of a feminist consciousness can be discerned. She had

> brought up her children in a square stone house ... She was a rigid but not a bigoted nonconformist, which meant that she went every Sunday to the Independent Chapel ... She spoke English to her husband and children, Welsh to her servants, and both in turn to her farmer cousins ... but she could never repeat a word of the Bible in anything but Welsh ... She had travelled round the world, but preferred her own city.
>
> (Lewis,1943,p.3)

Her husband, John, is flamboyant and generous but away at sea for considerable periods of time, so she manages the house. However, he reinforces the view held by a number of Hilda Vaughan's male characters, that women have no business sense, by leaving her a list of instructions. She dislikes this

> since in her heart she regarded the rules of a man-made world as faintly ridiculous. She did not go so far as to think that she would run the world better than men could do, but she was quite sure that she would run it differently.
>
> (Lewis,1944,p.56)

The bank manager perpetuates this patronising attitude and Lettice voices the antipathy which this must have aroused in many women.

> Mr. Davies ... was always gallant and unbending. "My dear lady ... I know these things are above you, but leave them to wiser heads than yours." ... Was he really so wise? Lettice asked herself, piqued by this masculine air of importance and mystery.
>
> (Lewis,1944,p.56)

She is generally content to be at the centre of her family but occasionally reflects on how much she had travelled with her husband when they were first married and how the arrival of children had restricted her. She convinces herself that "today I have everything that I can desire" (p.28) but worries for her daughter, Matty, who is six

years old at the beginning of the novel. The image of women as possessions who only have marriage as the ultimate goal is emphasised when Lettie argues that the future was "even more unknown for a girl than for a boy, since the choice of a way of life did not lie with her" (p.40). Lettie's sister, Martha, has had to sacrifice her own ambitions and stay at the farm to keep house for their father but Lettie maintains that marriage is also a sacrifice (even though it could be a pleasant one). She attempts to define a more positive role for spinsters and contends that "it was the unmarried sisters ... who kept flowing the stream of continuity ... merely to bear children ... was a scattering of energy" (p.28).

When Lettie's youngest son dies it is made clear to Matty that it is women who are emotionally strong and that they have to support the men in times of crisis. Lettie's consolation for the loss of one child is the realisation that she is carrying another, although there is no account of its conception, and the language used to describe her pregnancy is in keeping with a Victorian novel. "A small new voice had been growing more insistent" (p.191). Lettie encapsulates the concerns and fears of women of her generation, but again it appears that it will be the daughters or granddaughters who will bring about change, for "Lettice was not one to break down conventions" and "the fresh, endless tasks that would be hers with the coming of another child" (p.196) would occupy most of her time.

While Lettice Peters apparently accepts and welcomes these "fresh, endless tasks", there is no doubt that childbearing and childcare restricted the lives of many women (Gittins,1982; Beddoe,1991), and that those who achieved success in their field either

remained single, childless, married late and/or delayed childbearing. For Margiad Evans (1909-1958), marriage at the age of thirty one (during the Second World War), and a husband who joined the Navy gave her both time and space to develop her writing. Ceridwen Lloyd Morgan's (1994) account of Margiad Evans's letter writing to her husband, and its influence on her work, mirrors the experience of a later writer, Menna Gallie, as will be discussed in Chapter Five. It is unlikely that the birth of a daughter when Margiad Evans was forty two would have affected her work. However, the epileptic fits which began before her pregnancy were the symptoms of the brain tumour which eventually killed her.

Unlike Anne Beale, Margiad Evans never lived in Wales but from 1920 onwards she lived in the border counties (on the English side) until the last few years of her life. She considered herself a Border writer, "tied by birth to the English side but drawn to Wales by her imaginative affinities" (Stephens,1986,p.636). She was born Peggy Eileen Whistler in Uxbridge, London, to English parents, but she took her pen-name from her Welsh grandmother. Her novels reflect her perception of the Border counties as "places of torn allegiances and incessant strife" (Stephens,1986), and this is most prominent in Country Dance (1932), which is presented as the diary of Ann Goodman (half English, half Welsh), who has two suitors, one English and one Welsh. The tension between them results in Anne's murder and the expulsion of both men from their homelands.

Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan (1994) argues that the emphasis which critics have put on the sense of place in the work of Margiad Evans has obscured other, equally or even

more important, dimensions in her writing. She identifies a concern with gender by means of which the author "gives prominence not only to the very different world of a rural society, but also to women's experience of life" (p.46). She maintains that Margiad Evans uses her novels to explore the nature of female sexuality, and that in Country Dance, for example, the heroine is driven more by physical attraction than romantic love to reject her English lover for his Welsh rival. In the overtly biographical The Wooden Doctor (1933), the adolescent years of the heroine are overshadowed by an infatuation for the local doctor and also by recurrent attacks of cystitis. "The description of her pain ... and of the suffering ... relieved only by the doctor, become overt sexual metaphors", according to Lloyd-Morgan (p.49) and the "dominant image of the female is clawed and savage" (Dearnley,1982,p.15).

Margiad Evans stated that her characters were "with the exception of Country Dance ... solid English, flavoured with Celtic ancestry and named from a very far past" (Dearnley,1982,p.13). However, the Welsh women of Country Dance tend to be portrayed in stereotypical terms. Gwen Powys is miserly and a thief; "she stints for food and light and firing" (p.55), and tries to steal the mushrooms from Mary Maddocks' field. In The Wooden Doctor, Arabella's research brings her to Wales where she stays at a farm. The author depicts the farmer's wife, Mrs Shan Owen, as lazy, dirty, a gossip and a tyrant. While the girls do all the work of the house and the dairy, she "slept, ate, gossiped" (p.176). She is fat, garrulous, nagging, and "her eyes close together made her seem mean and dishonest" (p.173).

In Country Dance, Gwladys "sings hymns beautiful" and in The Wooden Doctor, Blodwyn, the preacher's daughter, sings and "the breath of Wales lay on her lips" (p.183). Despite the use of these stereotypes, reference is made to "Alan Raines' [sic] unrealistic sentimentalities" (Evans,1933,p.189). However, Roland Mathias argues that Country Dance and The Wooden Doctor "demonstrate a lyrical sympathy with Welsh tradition and feeling ... [but] for all her ability to integrate herself, Margiad Evans may still be suspected of being a Romantic writer" (Mathias,1987,p.93). She accepted her own smallness within the universe and

> the endless hard physical work which was the lot of men and particularly women in the rural communities in her own lifetime is not glorified but fully honoured for its own part in the changeless rhythm of the natural world.
>
> (Lloyd-Morgan,1994,p.54)

The concept of English being the language of advancement for the Welsh is also explored in Country Dance through the character of Ann's cousin, Mary Maddocks, who despises her Welsh neighbours. She lives in Wales but speaks English and "thinks it strange that the folk here should prefer their own tongue to English" (p.60). The Welsh-language writer, Kate Roberts, also drew her reader's attention to this attitude in Traed Mewn Cyffion (1936 - translated as Feet in Chains, 1977); the narrator complains that "the present generation ... gathered their ideas from English books, or from the Welsh papers that echoed the English ones" (p.77). Meic Stephens argues that Kate Roberts' observations "are as significant as those of any historian. English did allow you to make your way in the world" (Smith,1988,p.277).

Kate Roberts (1891-1985) is generally acknowledged as one of Wales' finest twentieth century Welsh-language prose writers (Stephens,1986). Her novels have been translated into English and, although "meanings shift in translation; the emotional charge of a word can be completely lost" (James,1983,p.110), it is possible to discern a general picture of Welsh women trapped in the gender role of "Mam". Traed Mewn Cyffion (Feet in Chains) is set in north Wales between 1880 and 1914 and portrays the hardships of life in a slate quarrying community through the story of one family. The main character, Jane Gruffydd, has six children and accepts that there is little chance of breaking free. Y Byw sy'n Cysgu (1956, translated as The Living Sleep, 1978) is set just after Second World War and the main character, Lora Ffennig, has to learn to support herself and her two children within a small community whose gossip undermines her confidence. However, she eventually overcomes their interference and finds happiness.

Despite the gaining of the vote in 1928, inequality was rife and Kate Roberts herself lost the right to work as a teacher when she married. The historical aspect of her work embodies a sense of loss for women (especially in the 1920s) reflecting the post-war attitude towards women in paid employment. This often manifests itself in her fiction as mothers' longing for lost children as "she writes about buried lives ... an absence of spirit ... [but] the final effect ... is one of strength" (Jameson,1950,p.107-108). Storm Jameson contends that Kate Roberts recognised female oppression but did not suggest radical methods to change the situation as she was too deeply entrenched in a patriarchal society. She was able to parody those

female attributes which were believed (even by her) to be positive yet, like Margiad Evans, she gives value to women's labour. While her works

> have public themes, they reflect a society which shapes and often constrains the destinies of its members. She often portrays life in a domestic setting, from within women's experience, but ... there is the tramp of men on their way to and from the quarry.
>
> (Stephens,1986,p.529)

This represents almost a complete reversal of Bert Coombes' autobiographical works (1939;1945) which are set in the mining valleys of south Wales.

David Smith (1988) asserts that the 1930s produced a wealth of clearly defined images of deprivation and that many novelists of this time attempted to portray the social hardships which they were witnessing or had witnessed. It would be impossible, within the scope of this thesis, to consider in detail the works of writers such as Gwyn Thomas (1913-81), Jack Jones (1884-1970), Lewis Jones (1897-1939), Rhys Davies (1903-78) and Richard Llewellyn (1906-83), for example, in an attempt to assess their portrayal of Welsh women. However, selected readings and critical studies may provide a basis for discussion. In general, the novels of Gwyn Thomas depict a world where

> Woman ... is of no real consequence ... acting rather as an automatic stimulus to the appetites of the sensual ... Women suffer or sell themselves but rarely think ... and consequently their existence as meaningful beings is dismissed by the narrator group.
>
> (Stephens-Jones,1976,p.50)

On the other hand, Jack Jones fully acknowledged the role played by working-class women at the turn of the century in the industrial valleys of Glamorgan. Black Parade (1935) spans the life of its main characters, Glyn and Saran, ending in the

1930s, and highlights the sordid living conditions of the mining community. Saran is a strong woman who works in the brickyard, but, although she exhibits what G.F. Adam patronisingly describes as "the characteristics and some of the best qualities of the working-class mother" (Adam,1948,p.39), David Smith (1988) argues that Saran is not idealised. She portrays a woman who has learned to counterbalance the demands of an exacting job with "snatched pleasure".

Lewis Jones was also aware of the social unrest and deprivation of the Depression years. His novels Cwmardy (1937) and We Live (1939) were intended "to show the people of the Rhondda overcoming de-humanization by poverty and defeat through their revolt" (Smith,1988,p.193). The central aspect of We Live is the marches against the 1935 Unemployment Assistance Bill and the novel emphasises a growing political awareness. Even the women of the community become politically active although they do not totally abandon their traditional roles. While talk of revolt startled Mary Roberts initially, her political involvement soon increased and she was elected to the council. She took part in demonstrations and encouraged other women to do the same. "She went from house to house getting the women ready" (p.238).

Mary represents those women who were beginning to realise their abilities and strength in a public role, although women in the mining communities had often figured prominently in marches and disturbances during times of social unrest (John,1984; Francis & Smith,1980). However, this realistic portrayal of the collective action of women conflicted with "idealised notions of femininity", and the media exploited this and portrayed these women as "desperate (and so laughable)

unfeminine viragos ... [who] by involving themselves in the affairs of men ... were unsexing themselves" (John,1984,p.77-78).

Perhaps the most commercially successful novel of these times is one which blocked out the hardships of the 1930s and replaced them with "nostalgic reminiscences" which "incorporate the mythology of the Welsh mining community" (Smith,1976,p.29). Richard Llewellyn's How Green Was My Valley (1939) has been translated into thirteen languages (but not Welsh) and has been filmed and televised. Outside Wales, it received wide acclaim, yet within Wales it has been perceived as "a translation of the melodrama of coalfield history into Romance ... dripping with realistic detail" (Smith,1976,p.28).

In general, the women of the novel are cast in the mould of the Mam. They police female behaviour and maintain standards; they manage the family budget even in the most difficult times, and sacrifice all for their sons. Women who step outside the boundaries of propriety incur the severest penalties even from their own families. Although the author recognised the existence of women pit workers, they do not feature in the novel except as exemplars of non-acceptable behaviour: "Shut up and behave yourself ... You are talking like the women at the pits" (p.74). In this community, women are very firmly fixed in their private world.

Whilst there is a brief acknowledgement of female sexuality in How Green Was My Valley, the author does not explore the topic to the same extent as Rhys Davies, whose earlier works attempt to address the issues of sexual freedom and the

emancipation of women. His characters are often driven by sexual passion; G.F. Adam argues that even in his later works Davies is preoccupied with the "betrayal of man by woman; the triumph of sensual woman over man ... man's fight to free himself from a sense of guilt towards woman" (Adam,1948,p.53). Whether this preoccupation stems exclusively from the author's homosexuality is difficult to gauge, but he does demonstrate an awareness of women's struggle for recognition and change.

Rhys Davies's women characters are generally strong and are often portrayed as calculating realists who manipulate men. Cassie, the heroine of Jubilee Blues (1938), was hailed as "The Woman of Wales" in a review of the novel in The Times Literary Supplement (1938), and was "healthy, shrewd, immensely vital, with something primitive in her". The novel is set in a Glamorgan mining community during the 1920s and 1930s, with Cassie as landlady of the Jubilee public house. She has been manipulated into marriage, but her innate capacity for survival surfaces and eventually she abandons her morally weak husband.

Olwen Powell is another strong character but her manipulative skills are fully operational well before she succumbs to marriage. The Black Venus (1944) is set early in the twentieth century but is concerned with the custom of "bundling" or courting in bed which had featured so prominently in the infamous Blue Books of 1847. Olwen Powell is the high-spirited daughter and heiress of a rich farmer and she is "handsome but ... possessing a mind of her own" (Davies,1944,p.1). She is tried before a court of morals for having abused the custom by enticing seven men

into her bed, yet declining to marry any of them. The practice is denounced by the Anglican parish priest but the Welsh Methodist minister defends the custom and Rhys Davies develops the tension between Welsh and English (a concern of both Hilda Vaughan and Margiad Evans) with humour.

The prevailing paternalistic and anti-feminist attitude is perpetuated by Cynog Thomas, the chapel minister, who argues that the world is "full of ladders" which are only for men to climb. He reinforces the domestic ideology by maintaining that women have tried to ascend but lose their balance half way up and are better suited to waiting at the bottom "with a cake in their hand". Olwen argues that she is not seeking to institute great changes but that women also have rights, especially in the choice of their marriage partner.

> "A woman poking a finger into worldly affairs I do not wish to be. Standing on a box to preach I am not and never will. There are those women who are made for such behaviour and great is my admiration for them ... And for myself I am not speaking now either, but for women ... brought up to wash a blanket snow-white, to cook a pie ... to keep a house sweet as the inside of a nut, and to work and work and work. For what all this? To please a man she is chained to till the coffin takes her."
>
> (Davies,1944,p.20-21)

Despite exercising her rights, Olwen remains dissatisfied, and when her passion results in pregnancy, she is forced to concede to convention. However, she does not marry the child's father as she is shrewd enough to realise that he would be incapable of managing the farm she will inherit. She chooses Noah Watts, an aspiring chapel minister, and thus gains respectability.

David Rees (1975) argues that Olwen Powell is characteristic of all of Rhys Davies's female characters who are "victorious in sexual and social relations". They are troublemakers, behaving as the mythological Hera. Even Olwen's mother "had her daughter's aspect of assurance, very plain in her buttoned-up but also ready-looking mouth" (Davies,1944,p.18) and she supports her daughter's feminist stance up to a point.

> "But the men too are needing schooling ... they have been spoiled and love only themselves ... And difficult to make them see that women are asking more things of them now. More than a home and children, more than a china dinner-set and clothes for her back. Asking they are for places in the world as full-sized human beings."
>
> (Davies,1944,p.22)

The author demonstrates his awareness of the difficulties women had faced, and were still facing, in their attempts to bring about change; how ingrained the domestic ideology had become and how it was perpetuated not only by men but women themselves. Olwen tries to convince the daughters of the village to wake up to their situation but

> Judging by their demeanour it seemed plain that the visitors were unimpressed by her outbursts. They were the women of the country, the protectors of its usages; ... Representatives of pots and pans, guardians of the hearth, eternal washers of linen, they wished only to mother children who were like themselves.
>
> (Davies,1944,p.97)

Less than two years after the release of The Black Venus, the Second World War had ended and there was a general acceptance that young women would continue in the sex-stereotyped roles of secretarial and routine factory work, but an even greater emphasis on motherhood evolved (Beddoe,1989; Braybon & Summerfield,1987).

Although the marriage bar for women teachers had been abolished in 1944, the war-time shortage of male teachers continued into the late 1940s and 1950s. Married women were encouraged to remain in their posts thus demonstrating that once again government policies and social attitudes towards women were shaped by the needs of the country. However, part-time working opportunities for women increased and this partially answered the demands of employers and the domestic ideology that "women should still be in the home - most of the time" (Verill-Rhys & Beddoe,1992,p.15).

Leigh Verill-Rhys & Deirdre Beddoe (1992) argue that in general, "the stereotypes of Welsh women in the interwar years were maids and mains" (p.16). These stereotypes can be identified in some of the Anglo-Welsh fiction published during this period but, as the above discussion has shown, a variety of fictional images of Welsh women emerged between 1920 and 1949. Although one prominent image was that of woman as victim, not only of Church and State, but of her own emotions, the majority of women writers portray heroines with spirit, intelligence and the capability to assess their situation and (often) change it. Most of these authors recognise the importance of equal opportunities for education and some suggest that this is the key to freedom for women. Publications such as Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex (1949) also served to increase women's awareness of, and attitudes towards, their role in society.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. MYTHS AND MISSES

1950 - 1989

The post-war years brought many social changes, the most significant of which have affected women especially. Jane Lewis's work, Women in Britain since 1945 (1992), details the changing social and economic fortunes of women and concludes that despite hopes that the post-war welfare state would benefit women most, they remained unheard and unrepresented. She argues that, while motherhood has been exalted, "the full dimensions of gender inequality have never been recognised by government" (p.9) and the work highlights the shifting emphasis of governments with regard to women's employment. However, she identifies three changes which have been of major importance: the increase of married women in paid employment, a dramatic increase in the divorce rate (especially during the 1970s and 1980s); and a considerable rise in illegitimacy, beginning in the 1960s, increasing rapidly again from the late 1970s, predominantly "among women who declared no intention of marrying" (Lewis,1993,p.7). The combination of the latter two 'trends' has resulted in a rise in one-parent families of which 90 per cent are headed by women.

Various sociological surveys show that despite the increase of women in paid work, "men have not substantially increased their share of unpaid work in the private sphere. This is bound to act as a constraint on women's choices and opportunities" (Lewis,1992,p.3). However, in Wales during the 1984 Miners' Strike, many miners' wives were forced to seek employment and the men had to assume the 'private role' (Red Flannel Films, 1994).

A marked difference in attitudes towards employment between middle-class and working class women has also been identified. Working-class women were often in paid employment for financial reasons, and at the end of the war, while skilled and professional women wanted to remain in full-time employment, those women who had more routine jobs often preferred to remain at home, even on a part-time basis (Lewis,1992). Fluctuations in female employment trends and activity rates in Britain have been closely aligned with the changing needs of the country. These patterns have been observed in Wales with the most significant change being the increase of married women at work from the 1970s (Molho & Elias,1982; Rees & Winkler,1987; Williams,1993). Gwyn Williams argues that, from about 1974, a number of women were able to "find jobs commensurate with their qualifications", but in general "Women's work ... [was] ... under paid, under-organized, subjected to gender discrimination and the degradations of part-time working" (Williams,1983,p.541).

Women continued to question their role in society and the Women's Liberation Movement developed rapidly during the late 1960s and 1970s. Demonstrations took place demanding equal pay and education, contraception and abortion, and adequate child-care facilities. Jane Aaron (1994a) maintains that, while Wales was somewhat indifferent to these early demonstrations, a number of "characteristic consciousness-raising groups" emerged during the 1970s which led, in turn, to the formation of "the diverse range of organizations, pressure groups ... and educational networks ... which together represent the public face of feminism in contemporary Wales" (p.194). The statutory right to return to work following the birth of a child came

into effect in June 1976 but there is still room for improvement in the basic provision (Cohen,1987). During the 1970s and 1980s an increasing number of working women have taken only short maternity breaks but a majority of those with dependent children work part-time (Lewis,1992).

From 1969 divorce became easier for women to obtain and greater access to abortion (1967) and oral contraception facilitated the development of a greater degree of sexual autonomy. However, an assessment of the actual causes of changes in sexual behaviour has not proved conclusive and it is extremely difficult to quantify the extent of promiscuity of this period (Morgan,1987; Lewis,1992). While there was a substantial rise in the number of divorces and abortions, and also in illegitimacy, the results of social surveys demonstrated that many young people still considered marriage and family life of prime importance. Popular literature, especially women's magazines, reinforced this attitude (Winship,1987; Lewis,1992).

K.O. Morgan (1987) argues that between 1945 and 1989, the changing employment situation forced more people to work further from home and that this contributed to a break-down of communities and of "moral values". Young people in Wales "appeared to become rootless, certainly much less enmeshed in a familiar small-scale world of the local pit or pub or chapel" (p.350). These changing social and sexual attitudes and the conflicts which they provoked have been reflected in some of the novels of Welsh writers, Menna Gallie, Siân James and Alun Richards especially, and will be discussed later in the chapter.

Governments have viewed many of these changes in social trends as "social problems". Working mothers and one-parent families were perceived as posing a threat to family life and to child development. However, this concern with the preservation of the family probably had its roots in the economic soil of the country and in an ideology which clearly delineated the roles of men and women (Lewis,1992). In Wales, women who continued to work after the war were made to feel guilty by men who argued that they were neglecting their children and homes (Red Flannel Films,1994), but women in post-war Wales benefited from a new sense of personal freedom. They began to challenge the traditionally held view that a woman's place was in the home and the middle-class chapel ethos which emphasized obedience, domestic and maternal duties, and the duty of a wife to provide moral support for her husband and his professional career (Mathias,1987). Oral evidence supports this changing attitude (Red Flannel Films,1994), and J.G. Jones (1990) argues that the most noticeable change of this period "was the decline in the influence and membership of the chapels" (p.157). This phenomenon has also been incorporated into the work of a number of Welsh novelists and will be discussed at relevant points throughout this chapter.

Despite the increasing affluence of the post-war years (Jones,1990), official subsidy for the arts had been minimal. However, the advent of a public grant for literature in 1963 widened opportunities for writers in Wales and resulted in a "burst of new writing" in the mid 1960s. Roland Mathias (1987) contends that with the establishment of an English-language section of *Yr Academi Gymreig* (Welsh Academy) in 1968, and an increase in the number of books written in English being

published in Wales, "Welsh writers were reconciled formally to Anglo-Welsh" (p.112). However, the work of those Anglo-Welsh writers who chose to publish in Wales was consistently ignored by reviewers of London newspapers and journals. Siân James maintains that pressure from London publishers also limited the focus of Welsh authors' work (Curtis,1992), which may account for the reduction in the numbers of Anglo-Welsh novelists in the 1970s, a situation which had not greatly improved by the late 1980s (Smith 1986; Mathias,1987).

Menna Gallie (1920-1990) was born at Ystradgynlais and, like many other educated Welsh women, became a teacher (Williams & Jones,1982). She travelled extensively in Europe and northern America but returned to Wales after her husband's retirement. Although she is considered primarily as a novelist, she has written short stories and articles, and has also translated Caradog Pritchard's powerful novel Un Nos Ola Leuad (1960), as Full Moon (1973). She uses humour well, but there is a danger in assuming that she is simply a comic novelist as there is always a serious undertone to the works, based on political arguments, social and historical aspects, and philosophy, for example, and her use of language is rich and varied. Her novels reflect the places in which she has lived and her involvement with the community. In northern Ireland she played an active part in university and local life and in the co-religionist Northern Ireland Labour Party (John,1990). She utilised these experiences and constructed her stories around them; even one event would be sufficient. She also encouraged "housebound" women to use their own memories in this way if they wanted to write but felt that they lacked imagination (Fish,1992).

Her earlier works developed from her first hand knowledge of industrial south Wales and, while some of the novels move away from a Welsh setting, the central character is usually Welsh. Angela John argues that "Her novels can be best understood as the writings of somebody fascinated by the drama of everyday life ... Her lifelong commitment to things Welsh and to socialism stemmed from her family history" (John,1990). In all of Menna Gallie's novels, the Welsh language issue features to some extent, especially the concept of English being perceived as the language of advancement by the 'upwardly mobile'. In Strike for a Kingdom (1959), for example, Inspector Evans "spoke Welsh but preferred not to let it be known that he suffered from this disability" (Gallie,1959,p.111). On a basic level this novel, which deals with the general strike of 1926, can be read as a murder mystery, but it also outlines the background to the strike and considers the social and psychological effects of the strike on individuals and the community.

The small, closed community of Cilhendre is closely examined and the novel highlights attitudes towards women, sex, education and politics. A popular view, voiced by the miners, was that education defeminized women and made them hard and uncaring. When Mrs Nixen, the mine Manager's wife, is told of her husband's death, there were "No tears, not a sign of grief, no women's carry-on ... They said she'd been to college, perhaps that was why" (p.53). The theme of female education is used again in Man's Desiring (1960), where the male narrator's comments on the university lecturer Lydia Kilmartin reinforce the myth of the de-feminizing effect and sexual atrophy attributed to the education of girls. "She says things to be smart ... It's because she's not married" (p.40). "Lydia was getting on

and spinsterhood was frustrating" (p.167). Siân James also highlights the attitudes of a small community to female education in her novel Love and War (1994). However, she highlights the objections often raised by women themselves: "what's the good of college ... It only makes people proud" (p.3).

Mrs Nixen is "repressed by good manners" (p.52) and her attitude to sex reflects that of a middle-class morality which suppressed girls' knowledge of sexual matters. She knew her husband was having a sexual relationship with Jess Jeffries, the wife of one of the striking miners, but she chooses to ignore it. Jess Jeffries needed money to feed her family and was paid by the pit manager for her 'services'. Although the whole village knew, her husband also chooses to ignore it. However, when she asks him if he was involved with the manager's murder, he tells her that he'll "put up with your whorin' when we're hungry, but ... I'll belt you if you don't mind your words" (p.84), thus reflecting the sexual attitudes and double standards of a community where men regarded women as property. This concept is also highlighted in The Small Mine when the collier hero, Joe, has sex with 'Sall Ever Open Door' and

> his mood ... given over to his body's needs, his soul centred below his belt ... he gave no thought to Sall as Sall ... The woman was part of the night, the luck of the night, the pool for the leaping salmon.
> (Gallie,1962,p.32-33)

Yet he argues that it is wrong for his girlfriend, Cynthia, to go for a drink with a male workmate.

Apart from the maids at the mine manager's house, there is no reference to female employment in Strike for a Kingdom. However, the women are not portrayed as 'Mams' except perhaps for Ann Williams, the mother of the local J.P..

> A kindly, amused, dignified woman, still beautiful, still wearing the fashions of the 1890s, the dignity of long skirts .. and white upswept hair. Her English was limited but her Welsh was lyrical, biblical, rich.
>
> (Gallie,1959,p.13)

She still adheres to the old ways, to the concept of right behaviour for women, and follows a moral code laid down by the chapels. Rachel, in Alun Richards' Home to an Empty House (1973), is another in this mould. However, Jess Jeffries is not afraid of her husband's knowledge of her affair but she is afraid of the social and religious ostracization which would follow once the chapel deacons knew. "They would cut me out of chapel see, and whatever would my mother say and the old neighbours?" (p.81).

Sarah, wife of Jack Look-Out, represents a younger generation even though she was "getting on for forty" and is depicted as a bad housekeeper. She is also considered devious as she had tricked her husband into marriage by pretending to be pregnant. In general, women are portrayed as gossips. When explosives are stolen, the night shift brought the news home and the "wives had shaken it out with the breakfast cloths" (p.164). Siân James's village women in Love and War (1994) also demonstrate this trait. "What am I doing having coffee with a *man*? This will get back to my mother-in-law before I've taken the first sip" (p.7). However, the women in Strike for a Kingdom do not become involved with politics. When the men prepare for a protest march the "women and children stood near the edge of the

waste ground ... cut off; leaving this to the men" (p.66), unlike the women, and the heroine in particular, of Lewis Jones's novel We Live.

The overall arrogance of the miners is realistically portrayed. They work hard and play hard, and believe that their women are there to serve them. However, the demarcation between the public and private spheres is well delineated. While many of these men are portrayed as being 'under the thumb' once they step inside their front doors, they are full of bravado and macho attitudes in front of their workmates but the author traces their gradual decline of morale and self confidence when the effects of the strike begin to bite. However, the narrator frequently makes derogatory remarks about male characters by using female imagery. The policeman is compared to a "nosy,old woman" and a "frightened, old woman" (pp.99-100) and he "buttoned up his uniformed coat, drawing comfort from it as a woman does from her corset" (p.160). The miners on their march are "like silly schoolgirls" (p.68), but Menna Gallie denied a conscious employment of such similes (Fish,1992). Siân James also refers to male characters in this way. In Love and War (1994), for example, the Chemistry teacher is referred to as "a bit of an old woman (p.105), reflecting, perhaps, subconsciously embedded stereotyped qualities of women.

Griff Rowlands, the main character of Man's Desiring (1960), moves from a Welsh, non-conformist background to English university life to take up a lecturing post. The novel is written from his point of view and examines attitudes towards women and the double standards which they often encounter, yet it adds little to any picture of Welsh womanhood, except perhaps to reinforce the 'Main' imagery. "Mam" was

concerned that Griff "measured up ... I'm not going to have you looking worse than the others" (p.5). She sacrifices her pride and borrows money from Griff's aunt so that he can buy a dress suit. This characterization reflects and reinforces an attitude of many Welsh families (and especially women) who were willing to sacrifice almost everything for the advancement of their sons. It is significant that the daughter of the house remains at home. Similarly, in Siân James's A Small Country (1979), which is set in the years around the First World War, Tom Evan's mother had ambitions for her son - "a lawyer was a gentleman" (p21), - but there were no plans for the daughter.

In Man's Desiring a letter home explores Griff's perception of what interests a mother: "Food ... clothes on the bed and keeping warm ... The people I've met ... eating my cake" (p.29), which are all related to the domestic world and to the protection of the young. This image of motherhood is frequently employed by the author. Mrs Jenkins, of The Small Mine, is also ambitious for her son.

> Joe, the worshipped, centred-on axis, pivot of their unspoken, universalised, unfettered regard ... Joe had gone underground ... in spite of his grammar-school six years and all of Flossie's attempts to make a clerk and a gent of him.
>
> (Gallie,1962,pp.8-9)

Similarly, in Menna Gallie's last novel, In These Promiscuous Parts (1986), set in the 1970s, Myfanwy Kendrew says of her 'daily', Blodwen, "the dear girl half-kills herself to keep her son at the university" (p.29). Blodwen's son, Gerald, was "her *raison d'etre*, light of her eye, apple of her life, Cambridge university student in his third year, her gift from the gods" (p.118).

Man's Desiring presents Griff's point-of-view, perceptions and attitudes, especially towards women and sex. "You talk too much about it for a girl. There's no need to go shouting it; just have it, quiet" (p.22). "He liked a bit of modesty in a woman" (p.15). He verbalises his macho attitude when he equates any academic problems which the female students have with sexual problems. "needs a dose of salts, that one, or bed" (p.29). He tells a distressed Lydia Kilmartin, "You look a terrible mess, love, but that's the way I like you. Quiet and tired and beaten. Why can't you always be like it?" (p.189). A reflection, perhaps, of the author's perception of Welsh male dominance and attitudes towards women's role?

The Small Mine (1962) returns to an industrial setting shortly after the 1947 nationalisation of the mines. The central plot revolves around the death of a miner but the main issues are the effects of nationalisation, attitudes towards religion and women, sexual and parliamentary politics, and personal and community relationships. However, the attempt to emphasise the Welshness of this community by representing the regional use of the community, as opposed to legal, names of the characters detracts from the central thrust of the work. Fred the Singing, Tom the Schooling, Lil Cream Slices, Mrs Griffiths the Stockings and Gwennie Nightlight are amusing to a degree but this device has been overused, possibly in response to the publishing pressures which Siân James also experienced and which will be discussed later in this chapter. However, there is a convincing portrayal of underground pit work which was developed as a result of the author's personal research (Fish,1992).

The female characters of this novel are mainly confined to the home as wives, mothers and/or carers. Some younger girls work as clerks in the pit offices but there is no real focus on women's lives outside the domestic world. The author develops images of women as a 'nag or viper': - "Bryn was an everlasting whipping-boy" (p.10); or as gossips, wearing curlers all day: - "the curlers ... would assert their plastic discipline until that cloth had been lifted, for combing out her sausage curls was Flossie's clocking-off signal" (p.8), an image which had also featured in Strike for a Kingdom (1959). The women's duties centre on the service of men: "He ... sat at the table, waiting for her to serve him" (p.177). "Flossie had put his cleaned and mended shoes in his bedroom and his best shirt was laid on the bed" (p.58). The demarcation of duties is clear. The collier hero, Joe,

> pulled the plug out of the bath, but made no attempt to clean it of the coal; cleaning baths was a woman's work and there are no greater respecters of the division of labour than the colliers. Cut coal and sticks, yes, but wash a dish or make a meal if there was woman to do it, not on your little Nelly.
>
> (Gallie,1967,p.58)

The author examines the exploitation of women in relation to their sexual desires through the character of Sall Evans, whose husband has deserted her. Sall is portrayed as an outsider. "She was thirty-six now and her life was given over to the care of her mother and to housekeeping for the two unmarried brothers" (p.25). She becomes easy prey for the men of the village as she seeks to relieve her sexual desires. "She was too experienced and not pretty enough to put up formalities and conventional hurdles ... and sex was only a gesture of friendship" (p.34).

Female sexuality is also considered in Travels with a Duchess (1968) and You're Welcome to Ulster! (1970), which are both set outside Wales but have a Welsh woman as the main character. Travels with a Duchess is a humorous novel based on the adventures of Innes Gibson, a Cardiff school teacher who travels alone to Yugoslavia during the "swinging sixties". She shares a room with an Irish woman and the novel explores the predatory behaviour of men towards married women who are alone, a theme also employed by Siân James. Innes contemplates the changing attitudes of and towards women, especially in sexual matters, and the personal turmoil which often accompanied them even for "a woman around the late forty mark" (Fish,1992).

You're Welcome to Ulster! is a tragi-comedy which deals with the Troubles in Ireland in a sympathetic and unusual way. The main character, Sarah Thomas, visits friends in Ulster and becomes caught up in political and terrorist activities, and the Troubles assume a very personal nature. Through the use of a Welsh-speaking heroine and the activities of Mab, a young, Welsh, would-be anarchist, the author introduces the theme of Welsh nationalism into the novel and attempts to compare the two countries' patriotic attitudes. However, apart from a sense of increased personal freedom, there is little development of a significant portrayal of Welsh women in either Travels with a Duchess or You're Welcome to Ulster!

Menna Gallie's last novel, In These Promiscuous Parts (1986), focuses on the position of women in society, on equal opportunities, on social class, and community life (Fish,1992). It is set mostly in Wales, in the 1970s, and the main character is

Rosie Kendrew. Rosie works in Oxford but returns to her mother's home in Pembrokeshire to help with a by-election. She is a firm believer in personal freedom (especially for women) but when the talk turns to "self-sufficiency" Rosie argues,

> "I simply hate the words, so bloody conceited ... Straight out of the Sixties, like Women's Liberation, another of my hates ... Give women the vote and equal pay and opportunity ... but all that other balls drives me to drink. My bra is the first thing I put on in the morning ... I never wore a bra for a fellow. I wear it because I look nicer and feel better in it."
>
> (Gallie,1986,pp.226-227)

This attitude would appear to reflect that of the author's (Fish,1992).

Menna Gallie's dry humour is demonstrated in the depiction of Rosie's mother, Myfanwy who

> was now over eighty but had never moved out of the patterns and prejudices of the Thirties. She remained a rather stupid and uncompromising Marxist; ... She lived well on the income from her dead husband's investments.
>
> (Gallie,1986,pp.28-29)

While Rosie acknowledges that her father "worshipped her, literally idolised her; he was totally committed to her beauty. She was like a collector's piece for him" (p.225), she considers that her mother is emotionally "sterile" and believes this is why her father sought sexual pleasure outside the marital bed. Mrs Kendrew's daily help, Blodwen, believes that *coitus interruptus*, or taking "the kettle off before it boils over" (the method of birth control advocated by Mrs Kendrew) was wicked because "if you wouldn't let a man go his way, all the way, when he was loving you, you'd no right to have him, and serve you right if he looked for comfort somewhere else" (p.49). A reflection, perhaps, of the attitude of many women who

perceived the need of man for support. Sex was part of the 'bargain'. Rosie is more natural but presumably more *au fait* with modern methods of birth control.

Sexual attitudes and behaviour also inform much of the work of Siân James (1932-). She was born at Llandysul, in Cardiganshire, and gained a degree from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Like Menna Gallie, she also became a teacher and as there was no provision for maternity leave during the 1960s, she gave up the profession to raise her family. The difficulties facing women during this period in relation to careers and family commitments is another theme which features in her works. Not all of her novels are set in Wales, but this was not the deliberate choice of the author. In a recorded interview, Siân James argues that publishers often have as much, if not more, influence on a novel's setting than the author does, and that in an industry which has been predominantly male it has generally been more difficult for women to publish their work (Curtis,1992).

Each of her novels deals with crisis, both universal and personal, such as war, infidelity or widowhood, but is also concerned with other issues which are specific to women. These range through social or class differences, the education of girls, the isolation of mothers or married women at home, shared experiences of women, male/female values and biological inequality, abortion, illegitimacy, homosexuality and female sexuality. However, these aspects are not dealt with as separate issues; they are an integral part of each novel developed, through the author's characterisations, plots and dialogue.

Only two of the novels, A Small Country (1979) and Love and War (1994), are set completely in Wales, each one focusing on a period of crisis for the country and for the individual characters, especially the women. The setting of Dragons and Roses (1983) moves between England and Wales and, like Menna Gallie's You're Welcome to Ulster!, weaves in the Welsh language issue as one of its themes, reflecting not only the authors' personal commitment to the Welsh language, but also their awareness of the aims and activities of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, the Welsh Language Society (Aaron,1994a). Dragons and Roses is a contemporary novel of a marriage between a Welsh man and an English girl, but does not focus to any extent on Welsh women, except to portray them in either a domestic role or expressing nationalistic concerns.

Although the other novels are set mostly in the suburbs of England, each has a tenuous Welsh link, yet they are not infused with the 'Welshness' of Menna Gallie's non-Welsh setting works. This is possibly because Menna Gallie's central characters are Welsh women in alien surroundings. Consequently, the following discussion will focus primarily on those novels of Siân James's which are set in Wales. However, as all of her works focus on women's lives, the changes that were taking place in society, and the social pressures that the modern girl was experiencing, the rationale for her choice of theme and setting for the other novels will be considered briefly.

Yesterday (1978) was set in 1966 deliberately, before the 1968 women's movement in the USA, as the author believes that freedom for women came not "because of burning bras, but because conditions were kinder" (Curtis,1992). She acknowledges

that this freedom was probably felt more strongly in the middle classes, but argues that throughout the 1960s the freedom was "percolating and widening". She maintains that in the 1970s the 'swinging sixties' was receiving disparaging attention from the press and she wanted to defend the time that, she believes, changed women's lives considerably.

At the beginning of the 1960s such devices as automatic washing machines, disposable nappies and, most importantly, play-schools, gave women with young children more freedom, and Siân James wrote this novel as "a celebration of the 1960s", a time which she sees as being markedly different (for women) from the 1950s. The period gave women choice. For example, as outlined in the work of Jane Lewis (1992) early in this chapter, the contraceptive Pill was introduced into Britain in the early 1960s and this gave women control over their own bodies. With the establishment of the Brook Advisory Clinics, contraceptive advice was also available for unmarried women by 1967. Whether this caused or increased promiscuity and led to a greater number of marital breakdowns is debateable, but the author argues that a healthier social attitude developed. She also believes that while divorce can have traumatic effects on families, an unhappy marriage creates a worse environment for children. During this time, men were also forced to reconsider their attitudes towards women and wives who were making, or attempting to make, their own decisions about major areas of their lives; this is reflected in Alun Richards' novel Home to an Empty House (1973) which will be discussed later in this chapter.

One Afternoon, Yesterday, and Another Beginning (1980), all focus on a society where the social expectation for girls was marriage and a family. The novels consider the problems of unstable marriages, of widowhood and of women alone in general, and suggest that women need to find or create a personal space: they do not need to think of themselves as **just** wives or mothers. They are also individuals and the author highlights the importance of achieving the right balance:

> The wonderful thing was that I'd stopped thinking of a permanent relationship with a man as the only possible way of life for me ... I was better off without a man who didn't want me and whom I didn't truly want except as a status symbol.
>
> (James,1978,p.173)

In Yesterday, which is set in 1966, Tessa's mother-in-law "didn't believe in mothers going out to work" (p.41), but Tessa disagrees:

> "Women are beginning to question the old values, being a spinster or a deserted wife are not such tragedies now. But ten years ago girls like me hadn't begun to think; for centuries we'd been conditioned to fear being on the shelf."
>
> (James,1978,p.107)

The heroine of Dragons and Roses also reflects on how her mother had also been conditioned to preserve the domestic ideology:

> "My mother thought woman was put in the world to be man's helpmate, to look after his house, cook his food and cut up his morning grapefruit ... I suppose my mother should have had a job, but at that time, the late sixties, it wasn't quite the thing in our world ... she devoted all the time she had left over from cleaning and cooking, washing and ironing, to a non-stop round of Woman and Home activities."
>
> (James,1983,pp.8-11)

A Small Country is set in mid-Cardiganshire and opens in the early years of the First World War. It is the story of a farming family and the women provide the main

interest. The novel deals with the conflict between duty and desire, a recurrent theme in the author's work. She also parallels the heroine's struggle for independence in rural Wales with the suffrage movement in London. While this novel and Love and War are set in war years, Siân Jaines argues that they are not about **the wars** but about the repercussions and effect on the women "left at home" (Curtis,1992), and in A Small Country the author emphasizes how restricted women's lives were. She also focusses on the problems women faced during this period, and the methods by which they attempted either to overcome them, or to cope with them. The work also considers those women who could do neither. To a greater extent women are portrayed as victims, not only of state and society but also of their own emotions.

The war gives the younger women an opportunity to change their lives, even though it is not in the way they might have anticipated or desired. Yet the men can also be considered victims to a degree. Tom Evans wishes to farm but his mother's expectations outweigh his desires; he is sent 'to be educated' and he fulfils his duty to family until the war offers him an opportunity to escape. However, he then has a duty to his country which takes him away from the farm once again. Although it is the daughter, Catrin, who wants an opportunity for education, she is opposed by the family because "Girls stay home" (p.31). Tom is also concerned because he doesn't know "what she might get up to ... Men can look after themselves" (pp.42-43). The author highlights how socially constructed gender roles directed children's lives with no concern for the individual.

When Tom Evans returns home from Oxford for the summer vacation he finds his family in turmoil. His father, Josi, has left home to live with his mistress, a local schoolteacher Miriam Lewis, who is pregnant. His mother, Rachel, has become ill and his sister Catrin wants to go to art college in London to escape from the confines of the farm, and from the expectations of marriage and child-bearing. Her story highlights a theme which is repeated, to a greater or lesser extent, in all of the novels: the education of girls or women. Most of the main characters have been concerned with their personal education and all appear to want more. It is reasonable to suggest, therefore, that this is the way in which the author sees women attaining personal freedom.

Tom's friend, Edward, is engaged to Rose, who has become involved with the suffrage movement in London. He believes that she "is determined to become a martyr" (p.26), but the reality of arson, and her subsequent arrest break her spirit and she succumbs, for a short while, to patriarchal pressure. When war breaks out, she reasserts, or develops, her strength of character by joining firstly the Voluntary Aid Detachment and then the Military Nursing Service, thus gaining a measure of personal independence, as did many young women of that period (Brown,1991).

For Josia Evans, desire triumphs over duty and he sets up home with his mistress. His character is used to strengthen the double-standard philosophy which has been a concern of many of the writers previously discussed. "The idea that marriage stops men fancying women!" (p.36). When he and Miriam begin their affair, he tells her that she must stop seeing "the bank clerk ... [as] ... it isn't fair on me" (p.64). The

character of Miriam was based on the author's aunt, who had been not only a teacher but a suffragette during the First World War and had ended two engagements because she did not want to lose her independence. Miriam's pregnancy forces her to leave teaching, and the pressures of having an illegitimate child drive her to suicide.

Miriam's story illustrates the limited educational opportunities for girls at the turn of the century and, if the opportunity arose and was taken, the plight of many women who had to choose between independence and marriage. She is portrayed as a victim of social and sexual pressure. When she was fourteen, her schoolmaster knew that

> if she had been a boy he would have moved heaven and earth and the county education authority to get her a scholarship to Oxford or Cambridge. As it was, he had gone to see her mother ... to let her have another year at school as an assistant uncertificated teacher.
> (James,1989,p.55)

At eighteen she had gone to Swansea to be examined for her teacher's certificate. Some time later she turns down a proposal of marriage primarily because she values her independence, but also because she cannot face conforming, and she questions the traditional role of women in society, "doing what the neighbours did, going to Chapel on a Sunday; being not only a wife, a daughter-in-law, probably a mother, but a member of a respectable, red-bricked society" (p.59).

Nano Rees, the elderly housekeeper, is a secondary character, yet plays an important role in the novel. She represents a continuity of the generations and highlights some of the main concerns or issues in the novel. She raises the questions of language, and the perceived breakdown of community spirit after the introduction of farm machinery reduced the number of farm hands needed for harvesting. Yet she is also

aware that progress and change are inevitable and supports Catrin's wish to go to art college. She believes that "nothing came of trying to change anyone's nature" (p.16). The author also uses secondary characters to develop central concerns of the work in other novels, for example, Ilona Hughes in Love and War and Annie in A Dangerous Time. As these characters are usually portrayed as comic, or larger-than-life, a comparison could be drawn with the role of Shakespeare's fools. Nano also represents woman as 'keeper of the morals'. She argues that in the case of adultery "the woman is always to blame ... It may be unfair ... but ... a man is always ready to take advantage, a woman must be strong and say no or there'll be no decency left" (pp.171-172). This view is shared by a number of Menna Gallie's characters, as previously discussed, and by the "tidy women" of the Rhondda (Crook,1981).

Love and War (1994) is set in Llanfair, a village on the coast thirty miles from Aberystwyth, during the Second World War. The main character is Rhian, a schoolteacher, whose husband is abroad on active service. As she is a married woman, she has been allowed to continue teaching only because of the numbers of male teachers who have enlisted. There are no dramatic war scenes yet the village is like the edge of a pond whose centre is in turmoil. The novel highlights how the outward moving ripples impact on the village and on individual lives.

Rhian expresses her real feelings in a series of imaginary letters to her husband which are interspersed throughout the novel and serve as a unifying framework for the events which unfold. She also contemplates the role of the women - "When Huw comes home, I'll probably have a family and become a full-time housewife" (p5),

the acceptance of this role through social conditioning, and the influence of mothers who seem "so certain of everything" (p.6). She wonders whether her own "opinions have crystallised by the time I become a mother?" (p.7). The author also explores the influence of religion on women's lives, the indoctrination of exemplary behaviour for women, and the developing challenges (not only from women) to these concepts. When Rhian tells Gwynne Morgan, a colleague and, later, her lover, "I've never in my whole life been to a pub ... That says something about my mentality ... the way I've clung to all the negative principles. Thou shalt not" (p.88), he argues, "you're not going to make anything of yourself, you're not going to realise half your potential, if you let your whole life be dominated by chapel rules ... What's wrong with you coming with me to a pub?" (p.30).

Initially Rhian conforms to the socially expected behaviour patterns, and she is also economical with her rations and clothes, - "I'm no good at spending money. It's my upbringing" (p.12), but as she begins to question her role in life and the influence of religion and community, she also begins to challenge some of the preconceptions and breaks out of her perceived confinement. She buys a dress from a 'Studio' instead of the local store and this becomes the symbolic gesture which marks the beginning of Rhian's personal rebellion.

> "I don't think for a moment that I'll ever have the occasion or the courage to wear it, but on the other hand I know that to leave without it would be as difficult as leaving without my skin."
>
> (James,1994,p.10)

Her mother-in-law criticizes her lack of thrift and Mrs Edith, who works at J.C. Jones store, advises her to "Run it up yourself, love ... Think of the saving" (p.9). This attitude reflects the media propaganda of the time which encouraged women be

thrifty and to be faithful: almost not to exist (Winship,1987; Curtis,1992; Verrill-Rhys & Beddoe,1992).

Rhian's mother is a widow and exemplifies the hard lives led by women in farming communities. "How long will my mother last here on her own ... working sixteen or seventeen hours a day like her mother and her grandmother before her?" (p.27). It seems that the next generation will be different, however. Rhian has a degree and a profession, although whether she would be able to work, as a married woman, depends on circumstances outside her control. She discusses women's view of their position and maintains that "it'll take years for them to consider themselves equal (p.152).

Rhian's lodger, Ilona Hughes, is portrayed as a forward thinking, independent young woman. She works in the local Post Office, is carefree, goes to the pub, wears make-up, and never manages to make her rations last the week. Rhian's mother-in-law calls her "fast" as she "has men in the house" (p.4), but despite her apparent free ways, even she bows to convention occasionally. She reinforces the traditional public and private gender roles when Rhian finally goes to the pub with her and a male teacher: "It's not the thing ... for women to go up to the bar" (p.93). "Welsh men are always happiest without women around ... Even death is more bearable in a black huddle of men ... With the excluded women in floral overalls seeing to the food" (p.93). Yet when Ilona becomes pregnant she wants to live alone and this attitude was to be widely adopted by many women in the 1960s and 1970s

(Lewis,1992). Ilona is prepared to confront the pressures of society and the open hostility of many married women:

> "Those wives who have such a hell of a life, a houseful of children, no money and husbands who get fighting drunk and beat them up every Saturday night; the most powerful emotion they've got left is anger for any woman who doesn't conform."
>
> (James,1994,p.110)

Huw has been well indoctrinated by his mother and he also exhibits his allegiance to the 'double standard' in his letters.

> I know you think my mother is old-fashioned ... but I agree with her ... I don't think it's right for you to have a lodger who goes to pubs ... in the company of soldiers. I'm quite sure you don't do anything like that yourself, but people might think you do.
>
> (James,1994,p.71)

He also tries emotional blackmail. "Please do what I ask ... My mother would be so pleased", but only succeeds in alienating Rhian. "soon my strongest emotion is indignation at how small-minded and overbearing he is" (p.71). "Huw thinks all my strange ideas are a part of my being a woman ... The worst thing about Huw is that he's so sure that he knows best ... that I should accept his judgement without question" (p.87). The seeds of independence are sown and Rhian reflects that "I know I could leave Huw ... because he's young enough to start a new life. I'm sure I'll never live with him again" (p.99). She tries to explain how she feels about her position as a woman and wife, and how others see her. "Huw is the Head of the family ... I'm just Huw's wife living in Huw's house". Her mother tells her, "That's how things are. That's how things have always been" (p.116), and she blames the war for unsettling women and encouraging them to envisage an independent lifestyle: "If it wasn't for the war ... Huw would be home with you, and

you'd have a baby by this time and another on the way and not a minute to give a thought to Mr Morgan ... or anyone else" (p.49).

Through the heroine's thoughts and actions Siân James highlights many women's continued sexual ignorance, which was compounded by chapel and home influences, and by inexperience. Initially, Rhian is prudish and even in her thoughts she is unable to be candid about sex. She uses euphemisms, describing sexual arousal as "such feelings", in marked contrast to Ilona who advises Rhian that "where sex is concerned, a woman has to take charge" (p.28). Rhian does not understand what she means until she becomes attracted to Gwynne Morgan, an older, married man who teaches at her school. When he is called up for service they become lovers, and, when he is killed in a bombing raid, Rhian finally defies convention and decides to leave her husband and move away from the village.

Another novel set (in England) during the Second World War is A Dangerous Time (1984), and the focus is also on the women of the novel, especially in relation to education which is a recurrent theme in the novels of Siân James. Laura's father does not agree that she should continue her education to university level. This is a view shared by Barbara's mother in Dragons and Roses as

> "our Barbara could have been a schoolteacher ... but for a girl, it isn't worth it ... Education is all very well for those spinster-types ... the ones who've got to learn to look after themselves."
>
> (James,1983,p.60)

Laura's friend, Susan, who is attractive and has assimilated traditionally held notions of femininity tells Laura, "If you had a perm and didn't talk about politics all the time, you'd get a boyfriend too" (p.77).

The author's concern with education reflects not only her own background and experience but also an awareness of the attempts to change the focus of education for girls and to widen their opportunities in the face of continued governments' educational 'prescriptions'. Despite the obvious gains following the Butler Education Act of 1944 there was continued educational pressure from governments for the majority of girls to conform to gender roles, even as late as 1963 (Beddoe,1987; Jones,1990). Following "the growth of modern feminism in the 1960s and 1970s ... An overemphasis on so called 'feminine' accomplishments was to be undermined by the quest for sexual equality" (Evans,1990,p.263), but early attempts to introduce Women's Studies into adult education (and offer more than a domestic focus), also met with hostility (Kennedy & Piette,1991).

One woman who demonstrated the benefits of education was the writer and artist, Brenda Chamberlain (1912-71). She published poems, journals and a novel, The Water Castle (1964), which is set in post-war Germany. However, her major prose work Tide Race (1962), describes the time she spent living on Bardsey Island and the harsh conditions experienced there. The women are strong and enduring yet, despite their isolation, the author is aware of the islanders' expectations of women's duty and behaviour patterns. She questions whether it would be possible for her to live on the island. "Alone; most certainly not. With a man, perhaps" (p.16). "It's no use for a woman to try living here on her own, because she's just a liability to everyone" (pp.83-4).

As in many of the novels discussed above, the women love to gossip, "for it is an unspoken tradition on the island that scandal and extravagant deeds are our meat and drink. It ran like fire through grass" (p.80). Pregnancy and childbirth are viewed as just another task, and when one of the women "gave birth to a son ... She returned to the island three weeks later; and helped the men to push the boat out from the beach, wading waist-high in the sea" (p.81). However, the author also highlights a lack of knowledge of contraception and its effects on the women:

> Dic Longshanks and his wife already had four children, the eldest not yet five years old when the fifth was born ... It was a hard life for Leah ... She had no escape, no relaxation.
>
> (Chamberlain,1962,pp.186-187)

Whilst the heroine of Alun Richards' Home To An Empty House (1973) appears to have a much easier life, she is still portrayed as a victim of her own emotions. The publisher introduces this novel as the story of a marriage "set against the increasingly anonymous background of an industrial Wales that is fast losing its identity", and David Smith (1986) argues that Alun Richards' concern was with a history that was becoming, for the younger generation, "something other people had" (p.155). In an attempt to present the effects of a changing society from different perspectives, the author allows Connie to narrate a significant portion of the novel, a method which has not often been attempted by male authors (Smith,1986). Connie is a successful teacher but not averse to using her body to get what she wants. She becomes disillusioned with her husband, Walter, who has tuberculosis and is hospitalised for the major part of the novel. From her husband's point-of-view, Connie is sharp-tongued and manipulative but also a temptress. He resents her strength of character

and she reflects that " Managing women induced resentments ... but no one ever told you what to do with men who couldn't manage" (p.69).

The other main, female character is Connie's aunt, Rachel, who has never married; initially, Walter thinks of her as "viperous" with a "hawk's eye for misconduct" (p.40). She represents an older way of life with fixed beliefs and morality. She "approved of wife-beating in certain circumstances" (p.186); this attitude proved difficult to eradicate even in the late 1980s (Hutt,1987). As discussed in previous chapters, women authors have been highlighting domestic violence and its effects for many years.

By the end of the novel, Walter is beginning to understand Rachel's way of thinking. "But perhaps she sensed the rottenness of our own myths. We couldn't live without any at all" (p.120). When Walter learns of Connie's affair with the anglicized Ivor, he leaves her. Yet for either of the women there is no sense of fulfilment. Rachel, who clings the old, Welsh ways is still alone in a fast changing world and Connie, despite her freedom to work and her control over her own body, has nothing to stabilise her. The novel closes with her thought that "the hardest thing of all to accept was my unimportance, my loneliness, just being me" (Richards,1973,p.240); this also reflects the sentiments of Margiad Evans (Lloyd-Morgan,1994).

The writers Alice Thomas Ellis (Anna Haycraft, 1932-) and Bernice Rubens (1927-) have been unearthing their Welsh roots in recent years (Kenyon,1989; Parnell,1990; Le Mesurier,1992). However, the settings, foci, or female characters of their novels

are not predominantly Welsh. The heroine of Alice Thomas Ellis's novella, The Sin Eater, first published in 1977, is an Irish woman who is living in Wales, and the work is concerned more with class and identity than with female roles. Social pretensions and taboos are exposed and ridiculed and set against the anglicization of a small, sea-side town. The central character of Unexplained Laughter (1985) is from the London publishing world and she retreats to Wales where she enters a realm of mystery and mystique. For Alice Thomas Ellis, Wales appears to be 'other than England', a place of wild landscape where the bizarre or fantastic are commonplace. However, her portrayal of Welsh characters is not particularly sympathetic and is reminiscent of the work of Caradoc Evans.

Bernice Rubens' novel, I Sent A Letter To My Love (1975), is set in Porthcawl, and the unmarried, central character, Amy Evans, is representative of many women who have sacrificed their own lives (voluntarily or not) to care for parents or brothers. The novel highlights the preoccupation of mothers with the advancement of their sons, and the psychological scars carried by their daughters. Amy Evans cried "inside herself for her mother's neglect" (p.9), yet there is no suggestion that this was exclusively a Welsh mothers' trait. The young Amy demonstrates a sense of personal rebellion, but she is not one of the women who grasped the nettle of opportunity.

There are few novelists who have created such a continuous picture of the changes within Welsh society as Emyr Humphreys (1919-). He has an interest in the individual interwoven with a concern for the future of Welsh society and this is

reflected in the time scale of his novels where he seeks "a valid continuity with the Wales of the last two hundred years" (Stephens,1986,p.273). Obviously, within the scope of this thesis, it would be impossible to effect a comprehensive review of all his women characters, as this would present enough material for a separate research project. However, the 'Amy Parry' series offer the reader an insight into the changes experienced by Amy from her poverty-stricken youth through to her old-age as the wealthy widow, Lady Brangor, from the years of the Great War, through the turbulent thirties and the Second World War to the 1970s investiture of the Prince of Wales. The novels highlight her search for a personal and national identity and her commitment to socialism.

Amy is successful in the County School, secures a place at University and becomes a County School teacher, as do many Welsh heroines, thus reflecting the limited choice of occupations for educated women during the 1930s. Salt of the Earth (1987)[1] charts her growing awareness of socialism and Welsh Nationalism which contrasts with the depiction of her "maternal concern and proprietary pride" (p.139). Yet she is also capable of making sexual advances towards Pen Lewis and although she allows Pen to make love to her, "There remained a critical edge to her submission" (p.149). The novel also highlights the inadequacies of maternity care through the death of Amy's friend, Enid, of puerperal fever.

Open Secrets (1989) is the fifth book in the Amy Parry sequence and begins immediately before the Second World war. Amy has married the poet and pacifist,

[1] While the publication dates of most of this series fall outside the range of this thesis, Salt of the Earth was first published in 1985, and given the prior number of novels by this author, it has been considered appropriate to include the discussion of his work in this chapter.

John Cilydd More and is raising his son together with their own, having exchanged teaching for housekeeping. However, her interest in politics and desire to increase her involvement with community affairs brings her into conflict with her sister-in-law, Nanw, upholder of the old Welsh ways. Through Amy, the author voices the opinion of many women of that era. She argues that she is "a wife and mother" but

> 'after the war, women must come out and take their proper share of the power. Take their place in the machinery of government ... It's absolutely essential that women have a voice, a decisive voice, in the way the affairs of the world should be run.'
>
> (Humphreys,1989,p.229)

However, a third pregnancy prevents further political involvement. When two older women discuss her disappointment one argues that "'You can't alter things ... It's a man's world ... There never has been much room for women in politics'" (p.269), but her companion is aware of the mood of unrest of women. "'Just because things have always been that way doesn't mean you can't alter things'" (p.270). At the end of the novel, Amy's husband tells her to choose between family commitments and a public life, but she wants both; a dilemma faced by countless women.

As previously discussed, women have made significant advances since the early post-war period, yet inequalities still exist (Rees & Fielder,1992). The majority of novels considered in this chapter reflect the changes in society and a number of authors have attempted to portray a changing image of Welsh women. Perhaps the most significant aspect of change has been an attempt to deconstruct the myth of the "Mam" and to increase the numbers of women characters who either wish to remain single or are capable of coping alone if necessary. The novels from both male and female writers reflect their interest in Welsh culture and politics, and from about the

1970s some male writers have been demonstrating a greater understanding of the psyche of their women characters in relation to a changing world (Hughes,1977; Meredith,1988).

CHAPTER SIX

CHAPTER 6

REPOTTING THE BONSAI

It is apparent that many of the women writers studied in this thesis responded very quickly to the social and political climate of their time. However, as highlighted in the preceding chapters, women were generally discouraged from speaking out in public. "The most successful women campaigners were those who managed to minimise hostile reactions" (Delamont & Duffin,1978,p.16), and the novel was often used as a vehicle of revolt, where women were able to voice their concerns with gender and the position of women, and where they challenged patriarchal dictates. For many of these writers education was the key factor in female emancipation and they dispute Rousseau's advice that a "woman's education must ... be planned in relation to man. To be pleasing in his sight, to win his respect ... to make his life pleasant and happy" (Figes,1986,p.31). Most of their heroines are intelligent, and when they are able to gain access to an education which offers more than a domestic focus, they prove themselves the equal of any man.

From the 1847 Blue Books, the picture of Welsh womanhood was bleak and the increased use of stereotyped, literary imagery was an attempt to manipulate the behaviour of Welsh women. Although images such as the Perfect Lady, wild Welsh girls and the occasional New Woman appear in the fiction of Welsh women writers since the 1850s, they were often employed to highlight social constraints on women. While the twinning or doubling of female characters is evident, their fate often deviates from the traditional, where only the compliant, obedient heroine is rewarded with marriage.

Many of these nineteenth or early twentieth century writers appear to argue that there were (or should be) opportunities for women other than marriage. However, they were not advocating that all women should remain single, but that marriage should be entered into with a free will and that it was more than a vehicle to produce children, or to raise or maintain status. It should be a partnership, with each partner contributing in their own way, financial or otherwise. On the whole, these suggestions are submerged or enmeshed within the romantic narrative but while they may not be as overtly expressed as in the work of many of the new Welsh women writers who "attempt to shatter passivity by speaking, and acting as directly as possible" (Aaron,1994a,p.192), they illustrate that women writers in Wales were aware that all women needed to assert their independence, not as a threat or challenge to men, but to develop their own sense of identity in a changing world.

It has been argued that for centuries male writers have demonstrated sexual prejudice towards women and have "excluded, marginalised, undervalued or even vilified women" (Kenyon,1989,p.71), and that the mass media has supported this (John,1980). In general there has been a limited exploration of the female psyche in Anglo-Welsh novels and women characters have often been portrayed as Mams, virgins, or harlots, although the use of such imagery could be explained in relation to male experience. As children they would have been in a home environment which was generally ruled by the mother, and from oral evidence it is clear that boys were not expected to help with domestic chores (John,1984). Boys were often cosseted by their mothers and they also had opportunities for education which most of the girls were denied. Girls not only grew up in the domestic world, they often remained in it, and they knew how hard their mothers could be. They were expected

to take responsibility for a number of chores and to accept the sacrifices which had to made so that the boys could be educated.

In general, the women writers studied demonstrate a depth of characterization which is often lacking in male writers' portrayal of Welsh women. However, it would be unfair to make sweeping statements about male writers' work as it has not been possible, within the confines of this thesis, to undertake such a detailed analysis of their work as of that of the women novelists. Yet it appears that there has been a shift in male writers' delineation of women since the 1970s; a number of them now demonstrate a greater understanding of the female psyche and of the changes which women have experienced through the centuries. However, since the mid 1960s there has been a paucity of novelists (especially women), despite the availability of bursaries and subsidised publishing, following the establishment of the Welsh Arts Council in 1967 (Stephens,1986). Hopefully, the launch of a number of women's presses in the mid 1980s will redress this balance.

While many women "are trying to discover the truth ... to free themselves from the pressure to conform to stereotyped images" (Carter,1976,p.14), literary images of woman as mother, wife and helpmate are still prevalent and continue to affect the way that women think about themselves. The adaptation of such images into other media only serves to reinforce them, as they reach a far wider audience. It can be seen that each age constructs its own desirable and undesirable stereotypes, and uses all available media to project these images. As femininity is a concept which changes according to the needs of each society, the dominant imagery of each age is important historically as it indicates the role society allots women:

> For we are born ... into the whole enormous expanse of a culture, a heritage that has to be learned, by every child, from the preexistent system of imagery that our ancestors began to make.
>
> (Janeway,1974,p.169)

Recent changes in social attitudes are evident and women have been taking advantage of opportunities such as the Open University, which has resulted in significant increases in enrolments up to 1989 (Sneesby,1990,p.12). It was anticipated that "by providing opportunities for thinking about women ... women's self-awareness will be heightened by a process known as consciousness-raising" (Ruthven,1991,p.71). However, wife beating has become one of the most hidden, as well as widespread crimes in Britain" (Sochor,1990,p.12), and since 1986 Welsh Women's Aid has established and run thirty one refuges for battered wives. This could suggest that consciousness-raising among women is only the first step in changing well-established behaviour patterns.

Despite government campaigns to enhance business opportunities for women, even in the 1990s it is still difficult for women to smash

> the dark glass ceiling [and] ... compared with either England or the UK, there are relatively few women at the top in Wales ... Gender clearly remains robust as a characteristic which divides people into those with access to top jobs and those without.
>
> (Rees & Fielder,1992,pp.99-101;108)

Rees & Fielder suggest that, to overcome these barriers, women need to "bring about a cultural change which recognizes that the best man for the job may be a woman" (p.111), and they suggest, as Allen Raine's novels intimated, that women do not need to be "Superwoman, or be like a man" (p.111). The message for women today appears to be the same as that expounded by John Stuart Mill in his letter to

Alexander Bain in July 1869: "The most important thing women have to do is to stir up the zeal of women themselves" (Stibbs,1992,p.29). They also need to be aware of the power of the image (Kuhn,1982), and it is vital that a new image is presented of woman "as an active participant in society" (Janeway,1974,p.182).

Many of the sentiments which Welsh women writers have expressed in their novels are echoed in Marge Piercy's poem, *A Work of Artifice (1973).* This challenges restrictive stereotypes and suggests that women have been crippled as a result of their conditioning (Carter,1976,p.14). However, it serves as a salutary reminder to everyone.

The bonsai tree
in the attractive pot
could have grown eighty feet tall
on the side of a mountain
till split by lightning.

But a gardener
carefully pruned it.
It is nine inches high.
Every day as he
whittles back its branches
the gardener croons,
It is your nature
to be small and cozy,
domestic and weak;
how lucky, little tree
to have a pot to grow in.

With living creatures
one must begin very early
to dwarf their growth;
the bound feet,
the crippled brain,
the hair in curlers,
the hands you
love to touch.

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APPENDIX A

Flight-deck of experience

ANGELA FISH explores the life and writings of the Welsh novelist MENNA GALLIE.

Developments in feminist criticism in the late 1960's and 1970's, together with the establishment of women's presses such as Virago, The Women's Press and, in Wales, Honno and Women write for example, have led to a greater awareness of the work of women writers. Work that has been long out-of-print has been reprinted and publicised, together with new authors' work. However, there are still many more forgotten or ignored women writers that deserve to be brought into the public sphere. In Wales, authors have often had to conform to the London-based market's desires and styles, so publication, for a considerable number of women, proved difficult.

Menna Gallie, who sadly died two years ago, aged 70, found no such problems: Gollancz readily accepted her first novel. But despite success abroad, mostly in the USA, and a review article by Raymond Stephens in the Anglo-Welsh Review during the 1960 s, the novels do not seem to have achieved the lasting acclaim they deserve in her native country. This is surprising, as they have much to offer the reader: humour, pathos, philosophy, political arguments, social and historical aspects, and all combined within a wealth of figurative language.

Menna Gallie was born and brought up in a Welsh-speaking home in the small village of Ystradgynlais in the Swansea valley. Although she wrote her novels in English, she remained proficient in Welsh. In 1973, she published a translation of Caradog Prichard's distinguished novel *Un Nos Ola Leuad* , under the title *Full Moon* (1973).

Her earlier works, *Strike for a Kingdom* (1959) and *The Small Mine* (1962) developed from her first hand knowledge of industrial south Wales. *Man's Desiring* (1960) and her later works, *Travels with a Duchess* (1969) and *You're Welcome to Ulster!* (1970), move away from a Welsh setting but are still very much rooted in the author's personal experience gained from extensive travels in Europe; her teaching career, and time spent at Keele, Cambridge and N. Ireland. However, the Welsh element is never lost, as characters/events usually have some link with Wales. Her last novel, *In These Promiscuous Parts* (1986), has not been published in the U.K. as yet, but the setting returns to Wales, as the author herself did on the retirement of her husband from the Chair of Political Science at Cambridge University.

'the novels do not seem to have achieved the lasting acclaim they deserve in her native country.'

At a talk given to the Swansea Writers Circle in September 1989, and a subsequent personal interview, Menna Gallie revealed that she did not consider herself a "professional writer" but an "entertainer" and admitted that, once published, she never re-read her work. Her novel writing developed out of a long-standing practice of writing lengthy, detailed letters. She wrote with a "given person" in mind; for an audience of one.

Her first novel, *Strike for a Kingdom* was written while she was living in Ulster. It deals with the impact of the 1926 General Strike, which occurred when she was six years old on a small mining community in south Wales. Her keen senses of memory and observation, and her painstaking research have given all of her novels a stamp of reality that encourages readers to place their trust in her representation of the subject.

Menna Gallie's father was not a miner but a craftsman, yet she remembered the

envy that she felt of the other children who went to the soup kitchens. Her exclusion upset and angered her, especially when her mother helped with the serving of food and deprived the young child of her company. *Strike for a Kingdom* was written as an "exorcism of guilt" from these feelings.

The small village community of Cilhendre is well portrayed.

> "From the top of the tips Cilhendre was a little huddle of pigeon-coloured houses following the curves of the River Tawe, which plaited its way among them, with the road and the railway for company. The sun polished the walls of the houses".

MENNA GALLIE: much to offer the reader.

Menna Gallie puts the Cilhendre of August 1926 under the microscope. The novel is not only very humorous and enjoyable (on a basic level it can be read as a murder mystery), but it also deals with such serious issues as the social and psychological effects of the strike on individuals and on the relationships between families, friends, colleagues and the community as a whole.

The overall arrogance of some of the miners is realistically portrayed; they work hard and play hard; women are there to serve. Although many of the men appear subservient, they still exhibit male bravado when the boyos are around. "Men, he thought, were not much use at the beginnings and ends of life, but they saw to it that they dominated its little midday businesses".

The sexual attitudes of the times are openly explored and the dual standards of one miner (and by implication of all men) demonstrated in his reply to his wife, who had been servicing the pit manager in return for money to feed her family. "Damn you, Jess. I'll put up with your whorin' when we're hungry, but, by Christ, I'll belt you if you don't mind your words"

Many of the derogatory remarks about some of the male characters are couched in female images: P.C. Thomas is compared to a "nosy old woman", and "a frightened old woman"; ". . .the strikers formed themselves into a straggling column . . . a bit like silly schoolgirls", "The police were themselves as frightened as women"; P.C. Thomas, "...buttoned up his uniform coat, drawing comfort from it as a woman does from her corsets". The author denied the deliberate employment of such similes; perhaps it is a reflection of the social conditioning of the sexes? Whatever the intention, the end result is a novel that "...is bitter and sharp and often uproariously funny" according to one critic.

In *Man's Desiring* (1960), the main focus of the novel is the transition of the central character, Griff Rowlands, from a Welsh Nonconformist background to English University life. The novel explores Griff's perceptions, "Talk about class, mam, fur coat and scent"; his attitudes to women and sex, ". . . you talk too much about it for a girl. There's no need to go shouting it; just have it, quiet; "...pretty girls who succeeded in looking sexual in spite of academic gowns". When he encounters the English Literature lecturer, Lydia Kilmartin, he feels out of his depth. "She was too enamelled for him and he liked a bit of modesty in a woman" Enamelled is exactly how Lydia Kilmartin is portrayed. she has developed a shell of clever-talk, and attempts to shock people with her opinions and liberated attitude. "I find there's no correlation between that sort of muscularity and solid virility. . . I could. . . introduce you to the more bed-worthy females. Not many of them are—or so I infer from the lads"(p 14). The characterisation of Lydia Kilmartin reinforces the myth of the sexual atrophy attributed to the education of girls.

The reader is encouraged, through the author's skill, to adopt Griff's double-standards, and does not really approve of this frankness from a woman, yet towards the end of the novel, after an attempted suicide by an academic wife, Lydia breaks down. In this state, she earns Griff's approval. "You look a terrible mess, love, but that's the way like you. Quiet and tired and beaten. Why can you always be like it?"(p 189). The undercurrent of this novel has a powerful strength.

The author's own experiences inform much of the

work — her Welsh background, and the time spent at Keele and Cambridge universities as an academic wife. The picture she paints is not always flattering. "Unlike most academic wives. . . his wife had kept her looks and youth. Most academic wives look ten years older than their husbands, they struggle so hard to be the little handmaiden, helpmate, slave, they get to look like caricatures of denial" (*Travels with a Duchess,*) (p 55). She admitted, however, that she hated Cambridge and saw it as cold and anti-feminist, yet she was unhappy with this novel as she felt a sense of betrayal of her own religious beliefs.

When contemplating *The Small Mine* (1962), which returns to an industrial setting in south Wales, Menna Gallie felt that her imagination had run dry. Remembering the death of a school friend in a mining accident, she decided to use this incident as the basis for the novel. She felt that to achieve authenticity, a visit to a pit was essential, and she spent two days gaining experience, even to the extent of using the pit-head bath. She believed this was her best novel; a view that appears to have been shared by Peter Green of the *Daily Telegraph*; "Though not yet a complete Gallie-slave, I am well on the way to subjugation" and also Elizabeth Harvey of *The Birmingham Post*; "Every word she writes counts and the society emerges starkly clear, an island floating in its own reality but anchored to our own. The characters are life-size, sympathetic, humorous. Menna Gallie's writing stings and invigorates".

The novel's focus is again a small mining village, this time shortly after the nationalisation of the mines. As with her other novels, Menna Gallie deals with many serious issues within the framework of her story, such as the question of the nationalisation of industry and its effects; attitudes to religion and towards women; sexual and parliamentary politics; personal and community relationships, and the question of The Bomb. She also develops ideas on persecution, in which, as she related at Swansea, she became interested after being introduced to European and Jewish Literature by the painter Joseph Hermann, for whose early nudes she was the model.

When Joe Jenkins, a young miner and the central character of the novel, talks to a friend about the influx of German workers to the valley, they discuss the effects of propaganda.

> "I can't say that I take to them. . . sometimes when I see those blokes on the road or going to work I don't think. . . Workers of the world unite . . . For the sake of the workers' movement. . . we ought to forgive and forget, but. . . they didn't do anything to us. We can't forgive on behalf of the Jews and the gypsies, those poor buggers are beyond forgiving" (p 19).

The six years before her next novel, *Travels With a Duchess* was published were fraught with a series of mental and physical battles caused by the onset of severe arthritis. For a time she was unable even to hold a pen, though her condition finally responded to treatment.

Travels with a Duchess (1968), is set outside Wales yet has an undeniably Welsh flavour, developed through the narrator's personality.

The novel relates the exploits of two women, forced by circumstance to share an hotel room in Yugoslavia. Innes Gibson, a Cardiff school teacher ("a woman around the late forty mark"), and Joan The Duchess', an Irish mother-of-six, are the main characters, with Innes as narrator. Attitudes towards, and of, women are explored, especially in relation to sex. The developing openness of discussions and publications on women's sexuality and identity of the late 1960 s, and the subsequent personal turmoil, was often reflected in Innes's thoughts. "But if she hadn't read these novels and articles and things she wouldn't have got this notion about her rights and all that jazz" (p 6).

Personal relationships are examined and tested, together with general perceptions of what Innes calls "pre-menopausal instability". When a medical conference coincides with Innes's and her husband's planned holiday abroad, and he suggests that she travels alone, she voices the fear of many women who have been married a long time. "But I haven't been alone in a hundred years. You lose the habit . . . Nobody ever believes a woman is alone from choice..." (p 15). Yet she challenges strident feminist dictates for the independent woman by demanding a choice.

Sexual attitudes of men towards lone women are illustrated vividly. Almost all the men in the Yugoslavian town suggest sex, generally referred to as "cinque minute", in exchange for taxi fares, drinks and portering for example, and the two women succinctly voice the prevailing assumptions, double standards and female conditioning in relation to this issue.

"What's wrong with these men, at all? Haven't they wives of their own to satisfy them?" (Joan). "They feel they'd like a change, perhaps, and I guess we're asking for it, on our own without our men" (Innes) (p 65).

During her stay in Ulster, Menna Gallie became involved in the political scene, and participating in community life. *You're Welcome to Ulster! (1970)*, which depicts life in Northern Ireland against a background of conflict during the 1960 's, was written when in "the comparative safety of Cambridge", but is based on some of the author's experiences of Ireland.

The novel's main character, Sarah Thomas, is a widow of thirty nine. She lives and works in Cambridge, but is of Welsh origin and clings to this identity. Sarah revisits Ireland and stays with friends, a Catholic couple, Caroline and Column Moore. Her exploits, and clashes with political activists, both Irish and Welsh, are portrayed with vitality and intelligence, and the overall effect is of a tragicomic nature. Mab, a young Welsh Nationalist hiding in Ulster, earns Sarah's anger:

"Mab, shall I tell you something? For an anarchist you make a very good creep. Your gelignite never went off... Your mother thinks you 've gone on a hitch-hike because you're worried about your exams"

'"Look, this is what I want to know." She spoke in Welsh". "... and Sarah felt secure that, for once, she'd crossed the almost insurmountable, invisible hurdle behind which Roman Catholic Ulster barricades itself... but Welsh was always out, until the Welsh began a Nationalist Front; thereafter the Welsh became... officially disliked as individuals, but half-acceptable as postulants within the nationalist mystique"'.

Though dealing with such issues as cancer and parliamentary and sexual politics, Menna Gallie attempts to develop a humorous view of these subjects, yet the reader is never allowed to forget their seriousness. "Sarah Thomas had a little lump in her left breast. She'd had it there for two years, an old enemy now". The novel is narrated from Sarah's point-of-view, and as the paragraph develops, the issues of cancer, surgery, disfigurement and death are explored in her thoughts.

The political aspect of the novel is not quite so readily submerged in comedy. Although the author encourages the reader to examine the seriousness of both sides, views, she also attempts to highlight the often farcical side of events. However, it would be an extremely difficult task to couch the horror that we associate with the Troubles, in lightweight language, and to sustain any comical overtones.

In Menna Gallie's last novel, *In These Promiscuous Parts* (1986), Rosie Kendrew, the main character, works in Oxford, but on returning to her home village of Trenewydd for a vacation, decides it is somewhat different from the rest of the country;

> "And there was also in North Pembrokeshire a strange, endearing tolerance of debauchery and sexual licence, which was at violent variance with the rest of officially Non-Conformist Wales. It was Rosie's belief that this kindliness, this forgiveness, sprang from Fishguard, the port for vessels from the Irish Republic, and that North Pembrokeshire attitudes were only an extension of Irish mores, overriding the basic hell-fire intolerance of the traditional Welsh chapels. The uncomfortable adjuncts of this forgiveness—such as penances—had, of course, been dropped into the Irish Sea en route to Wales".

Later, in the village pub, Rosie reflects on the question of class as she eavesdrops on a conversation of the Worker's Educational Association Sociology group,

> "... so that, despite the association's working class origins, there wasn't a proper working man among its members. The Welsh proletariat had raised itself on the bootstraps of evening classes, but none of its representatives turned up for sociology; perhaps they had too much sense to listen to theories about facts they knew all too well. Had it been motor maintenance, now, or industrial relations, that might have been different" (p 37).

Comedy is the vehicle that Menna Gallie employs to develop thought on serious issues, and this novel is richly endowed with examples of her skill. Discussion on self-sufficiency prompts Rosie to remark;

> "I simply hate the words, so bloody conceited... Straight out of the Sixties, like Women's Liberation, another of my hates... Give women the vote and equal pay and opportunity... but all that other balls drives me to drink. My bra is the first thing I put on in the morning... I never wore a bra for a fellow. I wear it because I look nicer and feel better in it".

It is Wales's loss that this novel is not available here. Every page provides the reader with a rich diversity of characters, situations, attitudes, and food-for-thought , while the author's wit has been honed to razor sharpness.

The term "female/woman novelist" was one that Menna Gallie disliked as she believed it was a pejorative term in 1967 and still is, as women writers are often criticised far more harshly than men. She argued that female writers are required to remain "modest and womanly" and that "sexual honesty" is generally only tolerated from male authors. In this respect, female authors require far more courage than their male counterparts. Menna Gallie's works demonstrate adequately the benefits of having such courage. It was because of these double standards that Menna Gallie wanted to be thought of as "a writer", although at Swansea she argued that, despite claims for equality, she did not tolerate "Germaine Greer"s attitudes", yet did not want to return to asterisked passages.

The personal experiences that inform Menna

Gallie's work illustrate her philosophy relating to the problems facing "housebound women" who desire to write yet feel that they have little to offer. She argued that "experience is a flight-deck of the known into the unknown", yet how is it possible for the majority of women to gain this experience? Novelistic research can prove extremely difficult, yet within the limits of their own environment they have to sift for experiences, after which the imagination provides the power to "take-off" into the unknown. ◊

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